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+PREFACE+



HOW many unfortunate authors have thrown out their lines to catch the public favor!—and how few have succeeded! Yet the author of the following prose and poetic sketches, regardless of the ill luck of the thousands who have cast their fly upon the waters, ventures to try his skill,—and hopes, with the same fondness which influenced his predecessors, to succeed in filling his basket with those golden favors for which we all earnestly labor.

The fragments contained in this volume were written in the author's youth, by the streams of his native

West, in the green solitude of the forest, at a time when his heart knew no care, and when the world, in the fairy-land of his fancy, was full of love and beauty. The reader will take them as they are, with all their rustic imperfections. As the author has not aspired to climb the dizzy hills of Poesy, but has been content to wander in the secluded valley, plucking here a leaf and there a flower, with which to form his humble wreath, it will not be thought that he seeks the honor of more pretentious laurels.

RUSSET COTTAGE, TUSCULUM, }
Near Cincinnati. }





CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION,	7
A WATER LYRIC,	11
THE SPRING-HOUSE,	16
THIRST,	23
THE SILVAN RIVER,	26
"LA BELLE RIVIÈRE,"	28
EMBLEM OF PEACE,	32
COUNTRY OCCUPATIONS,	34
A TASTE OF FARM-LIFE,	40
ODE TO THE BELOVED SPRING,	50
A RURAL MORNING,	54
CONTENTMENT,	56

	PAGE
TWILIGHT VERSES,	57
SPRING-HOUSE ACQUAINTANCES,	59
A RUSTIC "REED,"	69
MUSIC IN ANIMALS,	72
MUSIC OF SPRING,	82
THE BEAUTIFUL BROOK,	84
THE MOCKING-BIRD,	88
TO A BIRD,	90
THE MIDNIGHT BIRD,	92
A MORNING WISH,	96
DOMESTIC TABLEAU,	97
MORNING,	102
NOON,	105
THE SETTING SUN,	106
THE SUMMER SHOWER,	108
GREEN PEAS,	109
GOSSIP AFTER PEAS,	114
A DREAM-SONG,	133
THE MOVING WORLD,	136
THE GOURD,	138
LOVE-SONGS,	146

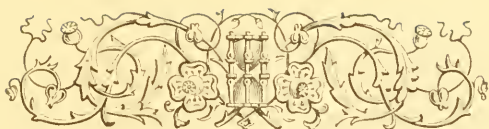
CONTENTS.

5

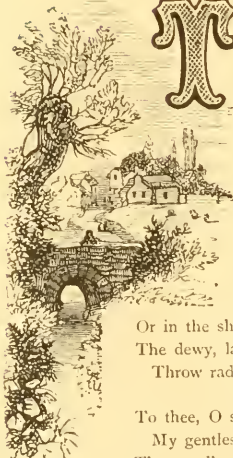
	PAGE
THE WIND,	153
OCTOBER REVERIES,	159
RUSSET COTTAGE,	174
NEW BOOTS,	177
BOHEMIAN FRAGMENT,	185
AN AUTUMN DAY,	188
DEAR, DEAR MAY,	193
FIFTEEN YEARS AGO,	201
WOOD-FANCIES,	204
BY SILENT GRAVES,	209
SILVAN ELEGY,	212







.....



TO thee I dedicate these leaves,
Torn from the forest nooks,
When blue-eyed Summer laid her hand
Upon the wood, and through its limbs
Breathed living joy and love.

To thee, thou tendril of my heart!
That clingest around it still,
In every season of our life,—
Whether the winds of chill Adversity
Bestrew our path with leaves,—

Or Ceres pours her golden horn
Of beauty in our laps,—
Or in the shadow of our days
The dewy, laughing eyes of Hope
Throw radiant gleams divine:—

To thee, O solace of my soul!
My gentlest friend, my love!
That read'st forever to my heart
The tale of deep and patient toil,
Through the far ways of life:—

To thee I dedicate these flowers,
Gathered in woodlands gray
Throughout the devious, sunny days,
When Dryads sat beneath the boughs,
And talked, as friends, to me!

.....

I weave the leaves, the roses wild,
Into a humble wreath,
And o'er thy blessed, peaceful brows
I hang them, and their odors rich
Spread halos round thy locks.

Though none may wish to breathe their odors,
Save me, and thy sweet self,
Yet will they scent with joy our lives,
And fling glad fragrance all around
Our pathway to the tomb.

To thee I dedicate these leaves,
Snatched from the shady nooks,—
And from my heart, my pleasant wife,
When weird-like music swept its strings
In the young hours of Love!

Let other poets weave their songs
In garlands of rich bays,
To deck the forehead of some king—
Some moneyed lord—who wreathes his lips
In smiles—half joy, half scorn:—

Only for thy dear eyes, that beam
Unseen and all unknown,
These leaves and flowers are here arranged,
And fill the quiet of our home
With fragrance and delight.

If other souls, in passing by,
Should feel their modest breath,
And pause—and bless it as they pause—
'T is well. Ah! not in vain I've wrought
This coronet of Love.



RUSSET LEAVES.





I.

A Water Lyric.

I.



NATURE'S soft-ey'd, sinless child,
Beautiful water, free and wild—
Leaping cannily over the hills
In bubbling brooks, in murmuring rills,
Singing forever a pleasant song,
Thou passest, in loveliness, along!

II.

On the mountain's rocky top,
Oozing faintly, drop by drop,
O, kindest spirit of air and earth!
Thou hast, I ween, thy royal birth:

There, in the regal realm of snows,
Born of the mighty Mist, that throws
Her vapory arm round the mountain's form,
Thou 'rt cradled and rocked amid the storm.

III.

Down the mountain's dizzy side
I see thee, child of the Vapor, glide!
Leaving behind thy palace of snows,
To wander—whither? O, who can tell!—
Thou never more shalt know repose
On hillside, or in grassy dell—
By rivulet, river, lake, or fell!

IV.

Dashing down the mountain;
Leaping from the fountain;
Tossing, in commotion,
On the wind-rocked ocean;
From the storm-cloud pouring
To the torrent roaring;
O'er the cataract tumbling,
With a sullen rumbling;
Round the whirlpool coiling;
Through the rapids toiling,
Seething, bubbling, boiling;
In a frantic quake and quiver,
Shivering with the shaking river:
Thus, O Water, in splendid strife,
Thou passest a part of thy restless life!

v.

When the sun puts on his vest
Of purple and of gold,—
A king in his evening grandeur drest,—
O, vapory child
Of the Mountain wild!
A city of splendor, icy cold,
Thou buildest for him in the shining West.

Castles, old and hoary,
Rise like ruins in a dream;
Banners float in glory
O'er weird battlements that seem
The fragments of a wondrous story—
The wild thoughts of a dream.

From the sunniest island
Of the misty skyland
A ship puts forth its antique prow:
Its sails uncurl, as from a sleep;
Its masts arise from out the deep;
It shakes its pinions free and wide,
And he who lists may see it glide
Silently, dreamily down the tide,
Toward the city cold and old,
That glows in amethyst, ruby, and gold,—
Toward the city dim and far—
Till, I know not when, or where, or how,
The vessel with the antique prow—
Each sail and mast, each rope and spar,—

Fades quite away
 In the twilight gray,
 With the dropping Sun and the dying Day.
 The Deluge of the terrible Dark
 Then covers, with its mighty pall,
 Castle, island, city, and all,
 And the rising Moon, that heavenly Ark,
 O'er the wide waste of Desolation glides,
 Serenely calm amid the eternal tides.

VI.

Then, O magical mountain maid !
 Thou weavest o'er the woodland bowers
 Beautiful woofs, in moonlight hours.
 Around the charmèd trees arrayed,
 By thy delightful aid,
 And by the moon-sylphs' beaming fingers,
 Are jeweled bands, that glimmer and glow
 In the delicate tints of a lunar bow,
 While the moonlight lingers.

The plants that all day, in the sun,
 Drooped their sad heads, one by one
 Arise, and all with one acclaim
 Whisper thy belovèd name.
 Every twinkle, every sigh
 Under the leafy panoply
 Of the far midnight Summer trees,—
 Which hum and murmur in the breeze
 Like the soft sound of hivèd bees,—

Seems laden with thine excellent love,
As thou—around, beneath, above—
Pourest through the woodland wide
Of thy pure heart the purest tide.

Dear, soothing queen of the forest shades,
Pleasant lover of starlight glades,
Nourisher kind of all that fades
In August noons—thy quiet power
Is owned by the forest, tree and flower—
Is owned by the rivulet that runs
Drowsily under Summer suns—
Is owned by the sea—is felt by the land,
By the valley low, and the mountain grand—
Is owned by the desert, hot and dry,
Which covers beneath a brazen sky,
And weeps with joy when thou art nigh!

VII.

Nature's soft-eyed, sinless child,
Beautiful water, free and wild—
Leaping cannily over the hills
In bubbling springs, in murmuring rills—
Singing forever a pleasant song,
Thou glidest along, thou leapest along—
In majesty, love, and beauty, along!

II.

The Spring-House.



TO lark that turns his musical bosom toward the sky ever trilled sweeter notes than the spring-brook which dances over the pebbles at the foot of the hill near my country cottage.

You approach this sparkling earth-goblet by a winding path from the door. A time-scathed maple stands over against it, bending its venerable arms graciously toward the stream, as in the act of benediction. Many a time, while looking out dreamily, from the window of my attic study, upon the solemn form of that old tree, have I seen my goodwife, Neibelungen, wind down the zigzag path to the spring below, lift the lucent water from its bed with her pitcher, and bear it, coolly dripping, homeward.

And there!—as I write these lines—there goes Ned, with a small pail in his hand, swinging it, and singing blithely as he walks, the incarnation of sport and young frolic! He is going to the spring.

Neibelungen frequently sends him there for water to get rid of him—the little pest!—for she knows that if Ned once reaches the spring she will not very soon see



him again. He has a poet's spirit welling up in his young breast, and the charming lullaby of the water over the stones, the dark, sandy bubblings and boilings at the bottom of the spring, and the cool shadow of the spring-house, are temptations that quickly subdue his unresisting mind. There he lingers for hours, dipping up the water in his bucket, and tossing the crystalline drops into the sunshine, or viewing his face in the depths of the brook-mirror, or dabbling his feet in the stream which rolls away to the spring-house.

The spring-house! That brings me to my subject.

The spring-house stands at a convenient distance from the spring, for the benefit of the water. It is built of rough limestone, is about seven feet high, seven feet in diameter each way, and closed on every side, except a door springward, and openings at the bottom for the passage of the stream. The roof is also of limestone, arched, and covered here and there with lichen, or moss, and cheerful grass and wild-flowers. Ranged all around the inside of this cool little cell are flat earthenware dishes and tin-pans, containing milk, the surface of which is mantled by a fine, rich, yellow scum. This fine, rich scum is called *cream*—something which the inhabitants of the pent-up city may read about once in a while, but never see. "Spot" and "Rosy," two sober members of the bovine race, come up to the gate every morning and evening to furnish our little household the sweet material which you see in those flat dishes: for which we give them, in return, all the grass they can eat.

I frequently, after the labors of the early morning—or

about your city "lunch"-time—visit the spring-house for the purpose of refrigerating myself. The ever-thoughtful Neibelungen keeps here, in the twilight coolness, two dishes which, ever since I left the maternal bosom, have been luxuries to me. There they stand, side by side, in yon cold corner, on a damp stone, the hurrying waters of the spring occasionally rushing up to kiss the vessels which contain them. One of them is called buttermilk; the other is known by the not very euphonious name of bonny-clabber.

Every morning, Neibelungen goes to the spring-house, and skims from the surface of the milk that has stood for some time all the rich, thick, golden cream. This she puts into a tall wooden vessel called a churn. Frequent and persevering oscillation of the cream in the churn, with a dasher, converts the greater part of it into butter, and the liquid which is left is called *buttermilk*. And a very excellent drink this is, on a hot Summer day. It allays the fever in the human system charmingly, as my experience vouches. The voluptuous metropolitan may boast of his iced sherbet, mint-julep, sherry-cobbler, gin-cocktail, Bourbon-smash, or whatsoever beverage is concocted in city saloons for the delectation of hot, perspiring humanity: but give me the white, glistening drink which comes, pure and innocent, from the churn.

Bonny-clabber—I know not whether my orthography be correct, but so it sounds when issuing from the lips—bonny-clabber is milk that has stood for some time, until it has become thick and jelly-like. In fact, you might consistently call it milk-jelly. It is as white as snow, and

has a pleasant, tart flavor, alluring to the palate which has not been vitiated by

“Hot and rebellious liquors.”

In drinking the rich buttermilk I use no cup of any kind; but lifting the pan or crock to my lips in primitive fashion, I drink until something inside of me whispers, “Enough!” and then set the vessel aside.

Bonny-clabber, however, can not be “quaffed.” It is not sufficiently *fluidical*. Nor can it be eaten, in the manner of sardines or deviled kidneys. It is neither a fluid nor a solid, but a happy compromise between the two, and requires a spoon. Taking a spoon, then, and separating a certain portion of the “bonny” from the quivering, snow-white mass in the crock, I place it in a bowl or saucer. Scattering over the top of the dish a quantity of white sugar, which is absorbed by my milk-jelly, I have a delicious combination of tart-sweetness and sweet-tartness of which the old Roman epicures, in the hight and fullness of their luxury, never dreamed.

I have been at social gatherings in the city, where, amid the blaze of gas and jewelry, and the tinkling of the guitar and piano, Morris’s or Louderback’s ice-cream has been taken with the relish peculiar to a festivity. But here is more enjoyment for my unambitious taste. The waters from the spring-brook come tinkling, tinkling, modestly and musically, over the rocks and pebbles in yon quiet spring-house—the songs of repose. The mist-like twilight in the building is more inspiring than the glare of gas, be there ever so many sweet faces beaming

beneath its splendor. And if some magician were to place beside my bowl of bonny-clabber the best lemon, vanilla, or strawberry ice-cream that ever grew into luscious existence under the manipulations of a city confectioner, I would seize *my* humble but pleasant dish, and proclaim it enthusiastically the prime luxury for the better feasts of man!



III.

Thirst.

I.



HE brave, rough soldier in the battle
Coolly listens to the rattle
Of the iron rain—
To the terrible brazen thunder,
Shaking the frightened air asunder
Along the battle plain.

But when sets the blood-red sun
In the blood-red sky,
And the day's dread work is done,
Hot with thirst, he lays him down,
A weary man, upon the ground,
To slumber or to die.

II.

O, delicious water !
Rock-born, cloud-nursed water !
In his sleep he dreams of thee :—
Thou kissest his burning lips to peace ;

Thou bidd'st his feverish longing cease ;
He starts and wakes, alas ! to see
The spectral dead on every side—
Sad, solemn relics of the tide
That o'er the surging field had past,
In fury, on the battle-blast.

III.

Where art thou, darling of the Mist ?
Where is the angel sweet that kist
His parchèd lips in cooling dreams ?
Where are the lucent-murmuring streams
That dashed their wet breath on his brow ?
Fled far from where he lies,—and now
The Moon sits in her burning lair,
 With serpent, horrid eyes,—
A demon, scorching the very air
 Between him and the skies.

IV.

No cloud is on the horizon ;
The zephyr, which soothed at eve, is gone ;
He hears no sound save the groans of the dying,
Or some wild bird in the wild wood sighing
A wilder song, and echo's sad replying.

V.

Thus, drearily, Morning comes apace ;
But worn and palsied with thirst and pain,
With watching the sky as if for rain,—

His cracked lips yawning blue and wide,—
The brave, rough soldier at daybreak died ;
And the Sun, arrayed in cooling shrouds,
Looks lovingly from his throne of clouds—
Too late, too late!—on the hero's ghastly face!



IV.

The Silvan River.



SILVAN River, softly sighing under the glow of
Western skies!
The sun-flecks round thy bosom playing when
aureate Summer suns arise,
Seem pure and happy spirits—gliding, vanishing like a
merry dream—
Of thy light waves the forest fairies—gentle, soul-inspiring
stream!

When Morning wakes from dewy slumber, running in
gladness o'er the lea,
And all the shadowy wrecks of twilight float off to dim
Oblivion's sea,
The poet seeks thy blooming border, to view Aurora's
earliest gleam
In loving dalliance with thy waters—gentle, soul-inspiring
stream!


And O, when daily toils have ended—when twilight flutters
in the West,
And Love's lone planet burns in beauty, like a rich jewel
on thy breast,
The sighing lover on thy margin starts at the night-bird's
boding scream,
Wildly commingling with thy music—gentle, soul-inspiring
stream!

There as thy waters rush and tremble, silently, in the star-
light dim,
He thinks of *her*, the haughty ladie, who never, never
thinks of him;
And in thy dark, sepulchral bosom, with smile as cold as
moonlight beam,
He hides his life and love forever—weird and ghostly
silvan stream!



v.

"La Belle Rivière."

URMUR on, thou noble River,—like old Time
pursue thy way,
To the great sea, in thy beauty, rolling ever
night and day,—
Gently, and with graceful motion, glide along through
countries fair,
To the wild and trackless Ocean—lave thy weary waters
there!

Lovers sighing in the starlight listen to thy lulling tone,
Just as lovers sighed and listened in the Ages that are
gone,—
While the Moonshine shapes fantastic figures in thy mur-
murous caves,
While the shadows of those Ages skim along thy shining
waves.



Savage barques, with dusky chieftains, never more will
glide o'er thee,
Gentle river, pleasant river, rolling softly to the sea!
Change is written in thy border, change thy every valley
fills,
Gentle river, solemn river, toiling grandly from the hills!

Wild-flowers plucked by Indian beauties, they were faded
years ago ;
Woods that, in their primal splendor, in thy valleys were
aglow.
Long have vanished like the light dream of the sleeper in
his sleep :
But thy white waves still commingle with the blue waves
of the deep !

Roses blush at morn, and wither ere the night-dews kiss
their cheeks ;
Buoyant clouds, which hang in glory round thy sunset
mountain peaks,
Fade and fall ere red Aurora lifts the curtain of the
Night,—
But, bright stream, with changeless beauty, *thou* dost
revel still in light !

VI.

Emblem of Peace.



IN Arden Forest, calm and free,
 Forever to a shining sea,
 A river flows in quietude—
 The angel of the wood!

No tempest ever rends its calm;
 But, peaceful as the Summer balm
 That dwelleth in the forest ways,
 This angel river strays.

The roses bending o'er its side
 Reflect their beauty in the tide;
 At night between some leafy space
 The Moon beholds her face.

And flecking dots of light and shade,
 By forest-trees and sunshine made,
 Dance gladly o'er this river bright
 When flies the dewy night.

And through the long, long Summer day
The robin pours his soul away
In music, by its margin fair—
 Rejoiced to linger there.

Without the wood a golden sea,
Where sacred Beauty loves to be,
Enclasps within its fond embrace
 This stream of joyant face.

And sparkling ever in the sun,
From rosy morn to twilight dun,
The river murmurs with the sea
 A holy lullaby.

A symbol of the good man's life :
Exempt from gloom and cankering strife,
Thus golden glide away his hours
 In Life's sequestered bowers.

And when the shade of Time is past,
He reaches that far sea at last,
To whose glad waters aye are given
 The blissful smiles of heaven.

VII.

Country Occupations.



MY present occupation is a more satisfactory one than "wielding the shovel and the hoe." I am laying out my rather limited but thrifty acres in choice shade-trees and shrubbery, and making numerous additions of convenience and ornament to my humble country cabin. At least I *think* I am, as sitting on a fence-rail, a short distance from the house, I see my wife Neibelungen feeding her chickens, my boy Ned trying to drive away the big rooster from his share of the provender, and granddad Dominic smoking his cob-pipe by the garden fence. If one has not the means to fit up his real estate in a manner suitable to his tastes, it is a great gratification to build beautiful grounds and stately mansions "i' the air," and become, in dreamland, as plethoric of funds as Nick Longworth or J. J. Astor. No law, either common or special can, as far as my limited knowledge extends, prevent a man from going (in imagination) to the nearest nursery, and transplanting its most precious vegetation upon his own grounds.

I have already made large improvements around my

home. I have walks and lawns in the rear and front of my residence—a flower and fruit garden flanking me on one side, and a young but vigorous orchard on the other. Climbing about my latticed porches are sweet-smelling vines, the perfumes of whose flowers invite myself and family, early in the morning, from our repose. Neibungen watches them carefully from day to day, and under her skillful tuition they blush and bloom into newer odors each evening. I have built stout, yet handsome, rail-fences on each side of the road which fronts me, with tan-bark walks beside them to tempt the feet of the weary wayfarer.

Along the fences, up and down the road, you may see growing ornamental trees of various kinds. There is the Lombardy poplar, the noble spire which seems ever pointing an admonitory finger to the heavens—a more graceful and inspiring sight than your “high church-steeple”—*my* steeple being erected by God himself. There is the silver maple, showing its white teeth laughingly whenever the slightest breeze comes by and tickles it. There, too, is the acacia, graceful as the prettiest of the graces, ever holding out a generous shade to the passer-by, and hospitably inviting him to rest himself awhile from the heat of the day. There they stand in pleasant array, those trees—side by side. When my wife looks along the road in the twilight, and sees them standing there so trim and orderly, she says she feels safe from harm. They look to her like an unconquerable army in line of battle for the night, sheltering her dear homestead from any rude invasion. Nor can I gaze at them, either when I rise at

morning or lie down at night without calling a blessing upon them.

I am now and ever have been very fond of trees. I love to look upon them in Spring, when they are beginning to dress themselves in their green clothes, and to hang rubies, and carnations, and diamonds upon their arms. I love them in Fall, when they are holding out their hands full of fruits, and asking all to come and help themselves. In late Autumn they are lovable, when, taking upon themselves the pride and glory of kings who know that they have supplied the bins and cellars of their subjects, they begin to clothe themselves in purple and gold, and prepare gorgeously to do battle with that dread monarch, the Wind, who too soon despoils them of their splendid apparel. In Winter they are glorious to look upon, as, in their desolation and nakedness, they still fight on, knowing that they will yet come out "more than conquerors." But most of all do I love them in midsummer-time. Their presence is grateful to the landscape—grateful to the eye—grateful to the heart—as they extend their broad, thick umbrage to the wayworn traveler.

Yon meadow-elm, in my meadow, on a hot Summer day seems to fling a coolness from its black shadow for hundreds of yards. The cows, as they pass near it, turn their heads and snuff toward it, as if they would like to taste of its luscious leaves, or lie down and ruminate upon the soft grass which covers its roots. It woos to its branches the birds, who, in its whispering leaves, sit and sing, or tell their loves and sorrows to each other. Under its shade I often lie at ease, looking beyond at

that concave, blue-vaulted tent, the sky, studded with its million fleecy clouds,

“Scattered immensely wide from east to west,
The beautiful semblance of a flock at rest.”

And on a windy day this tree is a graceful spectacle, while swaying to and fro, as if ready to take its departure for higher altitudes—Monsieur Godard’s monster balloon transferred, seemingly, to my fields, and painted with variable greenery.

The other day, while reconnoitering my grounds for the purpose of making improvements, in one field, on a smooth knoll, I saw a tree which was, even at this gay season of the year, as naked and skeleton-like as its forest brothers in dead Winter. It seemed a majestically formed thing, wreck as it was. When in health, filled with its breeze-loving leaves, it must have stood proud, strong, and beautiful—a perfect cone—a shade that a poet may have dreamed under. What, I thought, could have occasioned the death of so sightly an object? I surveyed its fine trunk, and found that it had been “girdled.” Some ruthless Vandal, walking by, ax in hand, had driven the hard steel through its bark in a complete circle. The blood oozed from its noble heart, and its life was gone forever. May its gaunt shadow haunt him nightly in his dreams! Years and years this tree had been growing. It had wooed joyously the first breath of the Springs, and mustered all its great strength to struggle with the Winter tempests. God had smiled upon it his sunshines

and wept over it in his rains—had called it blessed and bidden it thrive. And who knows how many a downcast pilgrim may have laid aside his burden underneath its branches, and slept there, sheltered from the dews of night or the heat of day!

. . . But now its usefulness is over! And I must leave it standing, long as it may—a monument of man's shamelessness and cruelty.

A kingly white-oak at the end of the farm, on the road, was also once girdled, in the night, when myself and family were asleep. I know not what vagrant iconoclast did the deed. But may the curse of Caliban light on him, whoever and wherever he may be! May the ax fall useless from his palsied hand, henceforth and forever!

You may judge how anxiously I watched, from day to day, the oak's expected decay. It seemed to me that its leaves gradually sickened, thinned themselves amid the tough branches, and pattered solemnly to the earth, like the tears of an agonizing giant. But when, next Spring, I saw the woodland monarch putting on its green robes as of old, and smoothing its grand face deftly in the sunshine, defying the wound which had been struck at its heart, I was glad. I knew then that it was destined to live on, even while I should live, and be, perchance, the inheritance of future generations.

It pains me to the quick when I see a tree with half-decaying branches, struggling, in a manner, for the breath of life. Each hearty wind as it passes by gives spirit and

freshness to it, as to a dying man. And when I see a farmer unnecessarily plying his ax upon one, I feel as if he were committing a murder.

For O, what tender memories they seem ever whispering to us through their trembling lips—those old trees! Each one has its tales to tell, even in the wild dim forest—tales that make glad or sorrowful our hearts!



VIII.

A Taste of Farm-Life.



THE quiet of my library at the top of the house is not usually as unbroken as I wish it to be. I find that the man who resides upon a farm has many cares and troubles, and that at the very moment when he is looking for peace and enjoyment—for a few hours' seclusion—he is apt to be disturbed by some irreverent token of a sinful outer world. I have frequently sat down in my attic-room, with books and other indications of study around me, and leaned forward to impress upon paper some pretty fancy before it fled, when my son Ned, a six-year older, or my granddad Dominic, has announced to me that a hog was in my potato-patch, or that a predatory cow was trampling down my favorite esculents. As Dominic is in his eighty-seventh year, and is just barely able to sun himself in the paths and grass-plats which radiate from and surround my humble residence, I am, of course, compelled to abandon my literary labors, and assist my willing son in expelling the invaders of my soil.

How these pestiferous beasts succeed in getting into my fields, is to me a profound mystery. I find that, to



drive them out, I must either open a gate or let down a fence, and then I am in a perspiration before I accomplish my ends, so fond do they seem of lingering amid the luxuries of my fields and patches. But they get in as soon as my back is turned, as if by magic. The swine appear to be made of India-rubber, with a remarkable power of contraction and expansion, and the bovine interlopers seem to be capable of converting their horns into probosces with which to take down and put up rails. I sometimes fly into a terrible passion, and, I fear, utter sentiments that are interdicted in refined circles. My wife Neibelungen chides me for my unwonted eloquence; granddad holds up his crutch as if to exorcise the rabid fiend which is stirring me; but my boy Ned, young as he is, looks upon the anger of his paternal progenitor as not altogether inconsistent with the occasion. He is worthy of his sire.

My fences are not bad fences. Winter and Summer I am at them, chunking up holes, displacing rotten rails, and putting bran new ones in their places, till those same fences look as checkered and striped as a convict's trousers. But all my labor is vain and useless.

Breachy cattle and ubiquitous hogs are ever at large in the rural districts. The farmer never heeds the lesson taught by their destructiveness; but laughs you to scorn if you hint that justice and honor demand his fencing in his live-stock carefully that they may not "worry" his neighbor's flourishing fields and gardens. I have reached the conclusion, after mature deliberation, that we ought to have a law *compelling* our farmers to fence in all their

live-stock. If a human being infringes upon my domain in any way, what is done with him? He is locked up—chained in some manner, so to speak, that my property may thereafter be safe.

Is a beast—a brute animal—so much better than a human animal that it should be indued with greater privileges? I demand of our legislators protection in our property rights from the invasion of horned and cloven-footed creatures, whose appetites are so partial as to carry them every-where except upon their owners' premises. Let it be understood that the man who has a farm so poor that he can not feed his stock upon it, shall either sell or kill such stock, and not fatten them from the stores of other people.

For these sentiments I know not whether my farmer readers will call me a radical or an *old fossil*. It depends very much upon the light they have. If they are from some "far countree," and are highly rapt with the newness and originality of American institutions, they will call me an old fogy, or an interpolating foreigner, and say that I want to introduce the customs of some parts of Europe among our own. If they are natives of the Western Hemisphere, and were born and bred in the broad, rough, and unfinished West, they will call me a reformer, and suspect me of desiring to upset the old standard of things, which they have always regarded as good enough. Their ancestors, from time immemorial, got along very well with the present condition of things, and, in good sooth, why should not *they*?

But I am neither an old fogy nor a radical. I merely

consider myself as one who has determined to look at life and all its belongings on the sensible side, and adopt as my motto the golden precept, "As ye would have others do unto you, even so do ye unto them." My cattle and pigs are never found in my neighbors' fields. They are never known to put themselves in positions for having their ribs broken by fiercely hurled missiles, or their ears and snouts torn by some unconscionable dog. I never permit the temptation of my neighbors' green pastures and luscious cabbage-gardens to attract them. Inclosing a part of my little domain for the benefit of my bovine and equine possessions, they ruminate or roll, according to inclination, the placidity of their lives unruffled by a breeze. A large, strong pen of logs is the habitation of my hogs. There they luxuriate in slops from the kitchen, alternated by occasional ears of corn, and grow fat and oily, at their leisure—preparing themselves gratefully, as it were, for my Winter larder—and never dreaming that other hogs are lounging upon the highway, "financiering" for an early lodgment in somebody's potato-patch.

This plan, of course, is not an original one with me; but it is good enough and economical enough for universal acceptance. The farmers in the Old World adopted somewhat the same plan years ago.

If you travel through Germany, and many other parts of Europe, you will put league upon league behind you without seeing a fence. Hill after hill, and vale after vale, roll before you, in checkered and delicious loveliness, filled with all the grains and grasses conceivable, and in the possession of a thousand different landlords, yet not one such

unsightly structure offends the eye. Why? The Europeans confine their cattle within inclosures, and throw their teeming fields open to the road.

It may be said that the Europeans do this on account of the scarcity of timber, and not from a kindly dislike of intruding on their neighbors' crops. Well, although *our* forests are so thick now, we are warned in many ways to be more economical in the use of them. Even in the West where wood is most plentiful, on account of its cost we are at last compelled to use bituminous fuel in the larger towns, the supply of wood for the purpose growing scarcer every year. We have, in fact, been wasting our forests to such an extent within the past decade, that the time seems not far when the expense of building farm-fences will be as great in this country as in Europe.

There is another reason why our farmers should begin the habit of building fewer fences, and preserving their timber-lands: The fertility of the soil itself depends upon the presence of trees.

Every man of experience and observation has noticed the effect which the cutting away of trees has upon the water supply. In places where woods once grew, and where the brooks, rivers, ponds, and springs were numerous, all have disappeared together. The woodman's ax has converted many a fertile country into a sterile desert. Four centuries before Christ, philosophers had made the discovery that the mightiest rivers are at the outset cradled in a leaf, through whose veins they creep and trickle before their descent to earth. Trees, therefore, were surrounded with an investiture of superstition as the parents

of fountains and streams. Standing on the tops of mountains, they spread forth their arms to catch and imprison the passing clouds, which, in their embrace, condense into water, descend to the ground in drops, and percolating through moss and grass into the soil, find their way through the heart of rocks to the various springs in the valleys below. Knowledge, however, in the heads of philosophers is like moisture in the peaks of lofty mountains, of no use to mankind till it descends to a lower level, and is possessed by the common people.

The Canary isles, when first discovered, were clothed with thick forests. A great part of these woods was destroyed by the first settlers: the result has been the lessening of the rains and the dwindling away of the springs and brooks. The aridity of the interior of Spain is owing to the hatred of the Spaniards to trees. Many districts in France have been injured in respect to climate on account of denuding the earth of its healthiest vegetation. The maritime regions of Algeria are remarkably dry, owing to the native husbandmen cutting away the arborescent productions. In Persia—that land so long the theme of the poet on account of its beauty—most of the uplands are now bare, barren, stony, and dry, so that for many days the traveler finds nothing to drink but the water he carries along with him in a leathern sack. When there existed a government in the land worthy of the name, things were very different. Then groves were planted on eminences; then the banks of streams were fringed with woods; then the crests of chains and ridges gloried in their primeval forests, which sheltered beasts of the chase, and formed

the favorite resort of the intrepid hunter and the meditative sufi. Then the pilgrim found springs of sweet water bubbling forth from every hill, where he could quench his thirst, and eat his noonday lunch beneath groves of orange and citron trees, which loaded the atmosphere with their perfume. But the glory of this goodly heritage has gone, with its groves and trees, torn away by the rude hands of the "cultivators of the soil."

On the other hand, I might mention instances where the planting and cultivation of trees in barren countries has made the waste places to bloom with gladness—the increasing of the woodlands bringing rain and moisture.

In Egypt, since the industrious cultivation of the palm-tree, the land is gradually resuming its pristine vigor—the Father of Nature, who loves trees, which he plants widely and richly where man does not despoil his work, smiles graciously upon the labor of the husbandman, and sends his clouds and showers, pregnant with life to the yearning soil. When the English took the Mauritius from the French, the too enterprising colonists cut down the trees from the rich hill-tops, and replaced them by cultivated fields. Very shortly it was noticed that the streams were shrinking; that one spring after another very mysteriously disappeared; that the green of the meadows changed to a dusty brown; that the grain soon grew up thin and hungry; and that the earth ceased to be productive. The periodical rains in due time cleared away from the cultivated country, leaving it exposed to the rays of a fiery sun, which scorched up and withered every thing for the want of a perennial moisture. The next step was, with

all possible speed, to reclothe the mountains with forest and jungle, upon which, as experience proved, the fertility of the soil depended. Since then all the land on the crests of hills and mountains has been retained in the hands of government, to be devoted to forest. The effect is beneficial.

I have given the Western farmer sufficient warning. His pioneer ancestors hewed away the forests with a recklessness that is appalling, and seem to have handed down the fatal passion to their posterity. I almost dread to reflect upon the consequences, unless a change occurs in the habits of the Western husbandman in this particular.

Why should not our lawmakers take the subject in hand? The Agricultural Bureau, at Washington, at one time recommended the planting and fostering of trees throughout the country, in order to maintain the productiveness and beauty of the land. The States—which doubtless have the power—should at once adopt the sensible recommendation, and pass the proper laws for the preservation of forest trees:—and the first of these will be a law requiring the negligent and unthrifty farmers of this fruitful country to confine their cattle within inclosures.

IX.

To the Beloved Spring.



SINCE all the poets write of thee, O Spring !
Why may not I, a humble soul,
Snatch a stray feather from Apollo's wing,
And of thy radiant beauty sing ?
Why may not I seize Fancy's bowl,
Dip it in Hyppocrene, and drink to thee,
Maid of the dewy lip and tearful e'e ?

On the red hill I see thy form,
Half naked, yet all loveliness, reclining ;
And thy glad music chides the sad and pining
Winter away, with all his sullen storm.
I feel thy breath, gracious, and sweet, and warm,
Creeping amid my hair, and thy soft arm,
Claspèd with rosy bands, is drawn around me,
Till I do feel as if Elysium bound me.



I love thee, my sweet Spring. I love thy eyes,
All lit with gladness, and thy blushing cheek ;
And I am sad, when thou art sad with sighs ;
Or if a cloud is on thy brow so meek,
Or thine eye dim with looking on the skies,
I watch thy sad dejection, till the tears
Come dripping o'er thy face ; then, then my fears
Sudden vanish : for I see thee smile,
And the tear glistening in thine eye the while !

I am a simple poet, true—
A silent wanderer in the vale of song ;
Yet O, dear Spring, I often walk with you
By the green wood, where, trembling, crawls along
The snaky rivulet, and where the blue
Sky peeps the leaves among,
And laughs at us—and ah ! not vainly sue
For kisses from the dewy lips which bring
Such odorous rapture to my spirit, Spring !

O, when thou'rt gone away—
Faded from nature like an Eden dream—
And Summer's tyrant ray
Smiteth remorselessly the shrinking stream,
Say, bright one, say—
How shall I spin me out the weary day ?
By looking from my window at the trees,
As they droop faintly in the idle breeze—
By listening for the birds that will not sing,
And longing for THEE, soft and dew-eyed Spring !

x.

A Morning Sketch.



SWEETLY bloom the vernal meadows in the morning ray,
When the night of gloomy shadows silent steals away,
And the dewy verdure glanceth on the new-born day.

Lo ! the birds are trilling, trilling sweet songs to the sun,
As he cometh o'er the hill-top, wrapped in shadows dun ;
And the streams are smiling at him—smiling as they run.

Hark ! how dimly, dimly ringing, stealeth on my ear,
Through the perfume of the meadow, sounds I love to
hear :—

'T is the sheep-bell's merry jingle stealeth on my ear.

From yon cottage, where the farmer liveth at his ease,
The blue smoke is faintly curling, and the balmy breeze
Bears the dim and sleepy spirit far above the trees.

See the pale, thin clouds a-floating o'er the matchless sky :
O, with what a silent motion are they passing by !—
Fading, fading into ether—see ! they melt, they die !

Ah, thou soft, harmonious morning, lovely as thou art—
Full of holy hope and beauty—soon wilt thou depart,
Leaving all as sad and lonely as my beating heart !



XI.

Contentment.



FTTIMES I fling me on a mossy hill,
Beneath the shade of some o'erarching tree,
And listen to the hum of breeze and bee,
And modest melody of bird and rill.
Serene Contentment dwelleth ever here,
The purest spirit of my leafy cell;
And Love and Joy surround me with a spell;
And Hope, the daughter of the dawning year,
Sings music to me, chasing all things drear.
O, happy fairies of my solitude!
Companions of my silent, silvan hours!
I would that Spring, with her young band of flowers,
And you, ye happy, heart-delighting brood,
And I, might ever dwell in this breeze-haunted wood!

XII.

Twilight Verses.



LOVE to sit me on some hill,
 In the dim twilight,
 When earth is motionless and still,
 And the owl his flight
 Takes through the silent, solitary air,
 And seems a melancholy spirit moving there !

When the gray old hills look, far away,
 Like clouds
 Painted against the cold blue sky,
 As the shrouds
 Of the dead Sun and Day are wavering o'er
 Their star-crowned summits hoar.

I die amid thy breezes, soft Twilight !
 Those isles above,
 Gemming the archipelago of Night,
 Seem full of love—
 Love that the loftiest poet ne'er may paint :
 In such effulgence all my soul is faint !

I feel the presence of a God
In this still hour !
I look upon the sky, and He is there ;
The modest flower,
Filled with refreshing dew, peeps from the sod,
And seems to feel the presence of a God.

And the dying air, which lingeringly creeps
Among
The drowsy woodlands, faint and slow,
Still hath a tongue
To whisper to my heart, in accents fair,
That God is here, and there, and every-where !



XIII.

Spring-House Acquaintances.



ALTHOUGH a pleasant breeze comes from the West, and passes along our country hills and valleys, undulating the fields of grain, and bringing cool odors with it, yet sometimes the Summer sun pours down a heat that is, perhaps, as sweltering as the reflected sunshine of the parched and dusty city. Occasionally the wind is hushed—not enough stirs to sway the lightest gossamer that hangs tremblingly from the old roof of the spring-house. On such occasions I leave my cozy den in the attic, and seek the cool retirement of the limestone building, amid pans and crockery-ware, and the quiet whisperings of the spring-brook.

Water dropping from high places or gliding over pebbly surfaces seems to have a peculiar effect on the atmosphere. Visit the fountain, where it spurts up far into the air, falling in mist and spray to the earth again, and, however sultry may be the day, you will find the air in that locality awakened into magical freshness, and the feverishness removed entirely from the atmosphere. So in the spring-house: as the breeze of this pleasant spot

is gently pulsated by rushing water, I pass here some of the happiest hours of Summer.

With my hat and coat off, my shirt-sleeves rolled up, and my shirt-collar turned back, *a la Byron*, giving the air free access to my neck and bosom, I lean back in a corner, and read "Spring Musings," "A Day on the Adirondack," or some such bit of breezy literature. Or, if I do not read, I dream, and picture fancies of my own till twilight warns me home.

A very happy, lazy way of passing the time—methinks I hear you say—while our hard-fisted yeomen are in the burning fields, building up our country's wealth—and their own.

Just so!

But, you know, the same all-wise Providence that created the bee and the ant created also the butterfly and the peacock. Were not these designed for some wondrously necessary purpose?

If I am endowed by Nature with the nice faculty of enjoying the murmurous solitude of spring-houses during the heats of the Summer solstice, who shall say me nay? Let him throw the first stone, who hath not some similar weakness in his character.

Besides, I *do* sometimes labor, as the condition of the fences around my little home abundantly testify. Those ornamental trees lining the road in front of me will, in future times, whisper my name to the traveler who reposes in their shade: they were placed there by my hands. The young orchard, springing so beautifully into maturity on each side of me, will bear fruit in a few years; and as I



pluck and eat, I will feel proud of the fact that, had I not planted it, the spot where it stands might have been desolate! Need I speak of the seasons in which I have cultivated Indian corn in the little patch set off for that purpose near my humble domicil, hoeing and covering the grain, while Neibelungen—a country-born lass—dropped the seed? Ah! those days of labor—my bones ache to think of them! But Nature never slights the farmer—(*Järmer!* “up, my beaver!”)—who does his duty toward the soil. Many an Autumn day have I eaten roasting-ears of my own raising, and in Winter-time indulged in corn-dodgers ground from the offspring of the seed which we have sowed in Spring! Nor let it be considered as vaunting when I say, further, that, in the cool mornings and evenings of Summer I often visit the “sauce-garden,” and, with hoe or rake, titillate the rich earth till it smiles with esculent vegetation. So, you see I am not, after all, so greatly *butterflyish* and *peacocky*. There is a trifle of the *bee* in my nature, forsooth.

Yesterday, at even the early hour of nine, the heavens were burnished brass and the earth an oven. “Spot” and “Rosy” stood in the pool, breast-deep, and lashed their panting sides with damp caudal appendages. The coldest-blooded birds had sought their nests in the wood; the domestic fowls stood under the trees or in the shadow of the house, with bills agape and drooping wings; even the slimy lizard basked out of the sunlight, inert and stupid. From the distant meadow came to my ear the frequent clink of the whetstone as the mower sharpened

his scythe, often seeking the umbrage of a lofty elm for that ostensible purpose, though really to get out of the heat. He paused to look, with reluctant eyes, upon the odorous timothy flaming in the sun, and returned to his labor with a sigh.

You may be sure that the close attic-room was no tempting place for me on such a day; and, taking a couple of duodecimo companions from my library shelves, I sought my Summer afternoon quarters in the spring-house.

In my numerous visits to this old building, on very hot days, I have noticed that, besides being a favorite resort of mine, it is also, apparently, a resort for other living creatures, who, tempted by the purity and sweetness of the place, go thither to pass a happy hour.

Such was the case yesterday.

A gay little mouse, at my approach, hurried through a cranny in the wall, and disappeared. A shining lizard peered at me curiously with his glistening eyes, but was either too indolent or too sociable to move from his position. A frog stood up to his knees in the cooling stream, looking as solemn as a judge pronouncing sentence of death. A handsome garter-snake crawled along the wall, tempted, no doubt, by the scent of cream, and thrust out his forked tongue at me as I looked in. A couple of lithe-limbed spiders had built their tenuous habitations on each side of the doorway, and were lying in wait for a "sucker," now and then darting forth and suspending themselves in the air, as if to look about and see what was going on in the world. Or, may be, they came out, in this manner to

invite, with their seductive courtesy, some unsophisticated country insect to enter their beautiful, highly ventilated palaces, and cool himself.

“Well,” said I, “here’s company for a hot day—quiet, pleasant company, too! These creatures will not trouble me with senseless disputes on politics or religion, nor give me *friendly* advice on my many shortcomings. They please me. Keep your places, ye innocent members of a happier race than that of man! I am no tyrant to interrupt your amusements or interfere with your tiny luxuries.”

I do n’t know whether the frog and the lizard and the garter-snake and the spiders understood what I said or not—for, you must know, I spoke aloud, and in as pleasant a voice as I could command—but when I took my seat in the corner, they all looked at me as if they were glad I had come.

I always like to go where I am hospitably received, whether among my fellow-men or out into the world of nature, among the simplest of God’s creatures. Give me solitude and silence in the forest or the desert, or on the mountains, or in the spring-house, in preference to the busy, chatty society of man, where I am neglected. Perhaps I am vain and selfish, but I like to be noticed. The Summer-day visitors of the spring-house noticed me, and I at once set them down as clever fellows, and knew that I should be at home in their company, though they should not speak a word.

But they had eyes, sir! And O, what volumes of eloquent speech are there in the eyes! What glances of welcome and gladness or of repelling hatred will leap forth

from the eyes, and form themselves into language! The lips may sometimes coin the basest falsehoods; but the eye has a lurking angel in it that turns traitor, and tells him who looks into its depths, "The voice lies—believe it not."

And so, whenever I wish to know whether I am welcome at a friend's, I watch to see what his eyes say to me. When the voice and the eye speak together, I know that I am in the presence of an honest man—and my spirit goes out to his in love!

The spiders left their webs as soon as I took my seat, and commenced cutting fantastic and elfish capers in the doorway—trending down to the spring-brook by their flimsy rope-ladders, wetting their feet in the water, and darting back again to their palaces, like fairy kings and queens, covered all over with sparkling jewels. The lizard did not move, but, as his face was toward mine, he continued to look at me steadfastly—his look of welcome. The frog, who had his back to me when I sat down, turned around quietly in the water, with a melodious croak, and fixed his eyes upon me, as though he would say he did not intend to neglect me. The garter-snake ran rapidly around the wall, and finally came to the ground at my very feet: and I gave the happy creature a nice dish of cream, which it proceeded at once to devour. I commenced reading aloud, and they all opened their eyes, sagaciously, listening. The mouse came to the edge of the cranny, peeped timidly in, and asked with his eyes if I was so dangerous that he might not come and listen too.

I have often wondered, while watching animals at their

antics, where the line of demarcation between reason and instinct ought really to be drawn. I have read sage books upon the subject, written by sage philosophers, in inflated rhetoric ; but, with all their wisdom, these grave and reverend seniors have never been able to throw light upon this point. Their arguments and inquiries lead into darkness and obscurity. An action that would be called reason if done by a human being they denominate instinct if performed by the lower order of animals. But it strikes me that reason is reason wherever it may be found, though among the weaker members of the Father's great family.

I have often seen sympathy and love beaming from the eyes—yea, the face—of many a poor animal, which appeared to comprehend even the arbitrary language of its master, and would have conversed with him, if its tongue were not tied.

There is a noble picture by Paul Rivière—a favorite of mine. A solitary old man, returned from the labors of the day, has fallen asleep in his arm-chair, while waiting for his broth to cook. It is “the long sleep” of death. His two dogs are leaping upon him, and show, by the inquiring and wondering manner with which they look into his face, that they more than suspect the fearful fact of his dissolution. The painter has delineated in the features of the poor quadrupeds, naturally and touchingly, the very soul of canine character. *Reason* is there, displayed in every attitude. The artist understands, what all must understand who read the nature of brutes aright, that they, as well as our own great selves, made though we are in the image of the Creator, have intellectual comprehension beyond

that of mere instinct—that they are endowed with reflection, with sympathy, something akin to the very soul of humanity.

Who does not admire the susceptible temperament of the old Dutchman who could not part with an ugly cur which he possessed? The animal was not valuable for his beauty. But when the honest Teuton came home at night, his dog ran, with joy, to meet him at the gate,—and the welcoming “wag of his tail” was beyond price. He could not sell *that*.

There is, indeed, a grand chain running through the whole animal creation, from man to the lowest, linking it together in sympathy and affection; and though voiceless may be the pride and the joy and the love or the hate of these poor creatures, their feelings speak from the eye, or some action, in utterances as deeply eloquent as those of the most enrapturing orator.



XIV.

A Rustic "Reed."



WAS suddenly disturbed in the eloquent reverie which closes my last paper by something that sounded like a rough attempt at music. The author of the melody paused under a tree in the vicinity of the spring-house, and attempted to imitate a few of the popular airs of the day; but somehow the music "flew him," and he could scarcely command the first bar. This was rather singular, too; for the young fellow whose piping I listened to is considered a genius. He could manufacture any thing, from a gate-latch to a barn-door, just after he was weaned, and had made, at a blacksmith's shop, a rough jewsharp, when he was deemed too young to use that instrument.

The "pipe" he was now playing upon was a rude article resembling a flute, which he had made from an elder-reed, and, though rough in mechanism, it was not devoid of melody. Its effect upon my spring-house companions was singular, to say the least. I had often heard that animals of every description are affected by musical sounds; but this was the first time I had ever witnessed the fact.

The frog pouched out his throat, and uttered a subdued chirrup, as though he would like to accompany the melody with his bassetto tones. It is scarcely necessary to say that the lizard and the snake were ravished by the lad's rustic efforts; for it is well known by every body that these cold-blooded creatures have a remarkable predilection for all kinds of harmony.

I was astonished, however, at the effect produced upon the spiders. They darted hither and thither through their webs, or rushed to meet each other at the top of the doorway, and seemed to be in delighted consultation over the curious melody that greeted their ears.

A fly—a great, burly fellow, all fat and juicy, and with a hum like a top's—got into one of the webs, and beat his wings with such furious rapidity against his prison-bars, that I could hear him even where I sat; but the spiders were so music-mad that they did n't pay the least attention to him. They e'en let him beat away, till he finally made his escape, and they lost a nice meal.

My little mouse was as much pleased as the other animals, and laid his ears back and threw such bright sparkles from his eyes, that I thought he was going to laugh outright.

If my companions had not been so highly delighted with the sound of the uncouth instrument—of *torture*, it was to me—I should have soon sent the embryo musician on his way. But the gratification of looking at them in their happiness more than compensated me for the rack of nerve that might have been occasioned by the untaught strains of this young emulator of Pan.

If you think I am not fond of music, you are mistaken. I like it, whether it be the music of a key-bugle, a flute, or a forest-bird; though, to be sure, I am not to be charmed by every melody. The simpler the air, the sweeter it is to me. I care not for the clangor of a full orchestral overture, where the keen ear of a musical detective is required to ferret out the various notes in the fierce clamor—and the enjoyment lies in the agonizing labor of catching the sounds correctly as they toss about the ears. There is to my mind more slight-of-hand than genuine melody in such music—as if Signor Blitz, the conjurer and juggler, should be turned into notes for the benefit of enthusiastic *connoisseurs*. No: give me the inspiring harmony of the simple ballad, when trilled by an educated voice or blown sweetly through the vent of a bugle or flute. Even the pretty Sabbath air which I heard Neibelungen sing, this morning, to cheer her labors, is more precious to my spirit than the instrumentation of the best performers, imitating the Cataract of Niagara or the way the water comes down at Lodore.

If the young man, with his reed, had performed the notes of the simplest air correctly. I should have been well gratified to listen to him, and should have encouraged him in his efforts. But, as it was, I could only tolerate his presence for the sake of my companions. Their ears, unaccustomed, doubtless, to a “concord of sweet sounds,” uneducated to even the rudest forms of melody, were satisfied, yea, enraptured, with what a human being would consider harsh and unattractive.

XV.

Music in Animals.



YOU may judge, from my last paper, that I am not one of those who have become insane on the subject of music. In the calm seclusion of the country I am best pleased with musical sounds. Those glad beings that "make vocal the woods," are not entirely unnoticed by me whenever I hear their pleasant voices. Their tones come fresh and entrancing, as from the very presence of the Creator himself. In the unbroken country, especially of a still night, even the harmony produced by artificial means affords much gratification. The sounds appear, in fancy, to come down from those orbs which, the bards tell us, are so full of melody.

I recollect having once heard, at night, the full-throated song of an American mocking-bird. It was one of those still, lovely nights that follow the close of a Western Autumn day. The whole sky seemed to be dreaming of love, and the earth reflected its quiet happiness. I had wheeled out a big arm-chair in front of the door of our country cabin, and was seated between its easy arms, looking at the stars, when the bird commenced. I do not see why

Milton has called the nightingale a "most melancholy bird," if its tones at all resemble those of the American singer. I was entirely carried away. I forgot every thing. I could not possibly have asserted, as my soul swelled with the rich music poured into it, that I was on the earth. All the stars in the sky seemed to melt into the dewy tenderness of angel eyes, as the bird sung to them. If you have ever heard the mocking-bird at night you can appreciate my felicity. Language is vain to describe it. When the song ceased I looked around, scarcely conscious of my whereabouts. My dog Fido sat at my feet, his ears erect, and his eyes dilated, as if he, too, was conscious of the beautiful and the divine harmony that had awakened the quietness of the hour.

Many animals besides mocking-birds, and animals, too, of seemingly the most unmusical disposition, have been known to enjoy musical sounds. Every body has heard of "musical mice;" yet how many persons there be who seem skeptical as to the existence of such animals. That there are mice having a taste for music, and with the power of giving musical entertainments, can not be gainsaid. A particular friend of mine, and one whom I can trust, says he once possessed a pet owl which had been taught to sing very much like a thrush. And if an ugly, frightful owl may learn to utter pleasant sounds, why may not a delicate, smooth-skinned, beautiful mouse that would not harm a butterfly?

A young gentleman, with whom I am acquainted, is fond of practising upon the ophicleide. Once upon a time—being, like most talented musicians, not very rich

in purse—he occupied a garret, so near the upper, outer air, that he could sometimes see the moonlight gleaming through the crevices of the roof and checkering the shadows on his floor. It happened that the garret was not as lonely as it might be; for a certain mouse—“a lovely, little fellow,” my friend said—would creep out upon the floor, near his very feet, when he was indulging himself with the ophicleide, for the obvious purpose of listening to the music. My friend felt an unusual pride in watching the antics of the little fellow during the musical performance. Not for any thing would he have disturbed the admirer of his amateur performances. There was something truly encouraging, he thought, in the manner in which the little creature would prick up its ears and listen, or hop around the floor in delighted forgetfulness of his presence. The sounds of the instrument had destroyed every particle of fear in the mouse. It was my friend’s pleasure, every night, on retiring from his labor, to take his ophicleide and call upon his quiet companion, who invariably appeared. But one night he came not at the usual call. For several nights afterward the instrument was played in vain. The little creature never again made its appearance alive; and, for a wonder, after its disappearance the ophicleide refused to yield the notes with its former ease. My friend was not so superstitious as to attribute this sudden inefficiency of his brazen favorite to the disappearance of the little elf who had been so fond of its harmony; but concluded, like a sensible man as he is, that his horn needed repairing. He carried it to a musical instrument manufactory,—and lo! on examination, the mouse was found imbedded in its

melodious interior. The little fellow, in love with the sweet sounds that came from the ophicleide while in my friend's hands, had crept into it during his absence, doubtless with the wish to partake in secrecy of the notes which it believed to be there, and had thus met its melancholy end.

Testimony is not wanting, from the newspaper press, to establish the fact that mice are musical creatures. The Buffalo Commercial relates a curious incident developed at the American Hotel, in Buffalo. A family, having rooms in that hotel, left town for a few weeks. On their return, they found that a mouse was in the habit of constantly visiting the cage of a Canary-bird which had remained in the room during their absence, having taken the opportunity of forming the acquaintance during the unusual stillness of the apartment. To the surprise of the family, it was found that the mouse had been taking lessons in singing, of its musical friend, and would constantly give forth notes in exact imitation of the Canary's tone, but low and sweet. The little creature, even after the return of the family, visited the cage nightly, ate of the seed, and endeavored, by its singing, to excite the attention and call forth the notes of the bird.

A Virginia paper, the Charleston Spirit of Jefferson, speaks of a musical prodigy in the shape of a mouse, in the possession of Mr. Aisquith, living in that section. Mr. Aisquith was attracted several times by a singing in his room, at different intervals of the night, and curiosity induced him to set a watch, and, if possible, capture his serenader. He succeeded at last, and caged him for the

inspection of the curious. His notes were clear and distinct, and his imitations were of familiar songsters, such as the partridge, chicken, Canary-bird, etc.

My own observation has taught me that the lower order of animals are not altogether as neglectful of melodious sounds as some wise persons may imagine.

Sometimes, in the still Summer mornings, just before the sun has risen, I love to draw my arm-chair out on the grass before my door, and sing some trifling ditty, as I watch the sun reddening the heavens with a gradual light. These are my happiest hours, and I *can* sing then.

I have observed, during these musical recreations, a large English bird pause near me, and seem to be intently listening to the song. Can it be possible, I have often asked myself, that this bird really appreciates my musical talents? To test the question, I have wheeled my chair to the other side of the house, and, to my astonishment, the bird has followed me: and, with one leg raised, and his head turned on one side, appeared to be drinking in every note, expressing, in the meanwhile, by the sparkle of his eyes, the greatest pleasure. From this circumstance, I have been led to the opinion that there exists, among all classes of animals, an undoubted taste for musical sounds. I am firmly of the opinion that, by a regular and stringent course of training, all the inhabitants of the barn-yard and stable may be taught to maintain an admirable and harmonious chorus. If animals were not of more value in other departments, on the farm, I would advise a test of their musical faculties.

What would you think if you should hear a dog sing?

A certain traveler in Kamtschatka informs us that he has heard them howl the most enchanting music, in the still nights, as they pursued their way over the frozen snow. It does not seem to me that there could ever be any possible harmony in the howl of a dog. The traveler's story has a Munchausonish air; it smacks of deceit; and yet, for all that, it may be true. But only think of the uniqueness of a dog-serenade by moonlight! I have a certain liking to dogs as characters; but I hardly think I could endure them as vocalists.

We have it from the best authority, that, if dogs are not actually capable of giving musical entertainments themselves, they are yet moved powerfully by music. On some dogs music produces an apparently painful effect, causing them gradually to become restless, to moan pitiously, and to display many other outward signs of suffering and distress. Others have been seen to sit and listen to music with seeming delight, and even to go every Sunday to church, with the obvious purpose of enjoying the solemn and powerful strains of the organ.

From this you may see that dogs, after all, are not devoid of musical taste. In this respect they are, indeed, superior to certain gifted men, whose minds are not capable of appreciating the most lovely sounds. Crabbe, who wrote such good poetry, could sit in a concert-room, when the music was in full chorus, and compose verses—not once dreaming of his whereabouts. We have an anecdote of the great lexicographer and critic, Dr. Samuel Johnson, who once listened to a finished piece of music from one of the most popular musicians of his day, and, when the

aria was concluded, coolly asked "what it all meant." "That is a difficult passage," replied a friend; "perhaps you did not exactly comprehend it, doctor." "Difficult!" retorted the giant; "I wish it had been impossible." If love of music be an intellectual quality, our dogs certainly deserve some credit. But here I would not be understood as comparing, intellectually, the most intelligent dogs with even the least intelligent men—not to mention Crabbe or Johnson. The disregard for music attributed to such gifted men, can not deprive them of one particle of the glory which posterity has in reserve for them. I suspect that Shakspeare's advice, to trust no man "who hath not music in his soul," was intended to be applied to man in the mass, and not to individuals; for some of the best men have held music in utter detestation. The harmonious echoes which awaken to joy the great soul of animated nature are to them tasteless and insipid—a bore!

But to return to the dogs.

Some dogs manifest a keen sense of false notes in music. A familiar writer says he possesses an Italian grayhound which screams in apparent agony when a jarring combination of notes is produced accidentally or intentionally on the piano. These manifestations show what might be done, by education, to teach dogs a critical knowledge of sounds. A gentleman in Germany, indeed, actually taught a poodle dog to detect false notes in music. Chambers, that painstaking gatherer of queer and wonderful odds-and-ends, affirms the statement.

The gentleman alluded to, a Mr. S., having acquired a competency by wise commercial industry, retired from

business, and devoted himself, heart and soul, to the cultivation and enjoyment of music. Every member of his little household was, by degrees, involved more or less in the same occupation; and even the housemaid could, in time, bear a part in a chorus, or decipher a melody of Schubert. One individual alone in the family seemed to resist the musical entrancement. This was a small spaniel, the sole specimen of the canine race in the house. Mr. S. felt the impossibility of instilling the theory of sounds into the head of Poodle; but he firmly resolved to make the animal bear *some* part in the general domestic concern; and, by perseverance and the adoption of ingenious means, he attained his object. Every time that a *false note* escaped either from the instrument or voice; as often as any blunder of whatever kind was committed by any member of the musical family—and such blunders were sometimes committed intentionally—down came her master's cane on the back of the unfortunate Poodle till she howled and growled again. Poodle perceived the meaning of these unkind chastisements, and, instead of becoming sulky, showed every disposition to howl on the instant a false note was uttered without waiting for the formality of a blow. By-and-by a mere glance of Mr. S.'s eye was sufficient to make the animal howl to admiration. In the end Poodle became so thoroughly acquainted with and attentive to false notes, and other musical barbarisms, that the slightest mistake of the kind was infallibly signalized by a yell from her, forming the most expressive commentary on the misperformance. When extended trials were made of the animal's acquirements, they were never

found to fail, and Poodle became the most famous, impartial, and conscientious *connoisseur* in the Duchy of Hesse, where her master resided. But, as may be imagined, her musical appreciation was entirely negative. If you sang with expression and played with ability, she would remain cold and impassive; but let your execution exhibit the slightest defect, and you would have her instantly showing her teeth, whisking her tail, barking, yelping, and growling. At one time there was not a concert or an opera at Darmstadt to which Mr. S. and his wonderful dog were not invited; or, at least, *the dog*. The voice of the prima donna, the instruments of the band—whether violin, clarionet, hautboys, or bugle—all of them must execute their parts in perfect harmony: otherwise Poodle looked at her master, erected her ears, showed her grinders, and howled outright. Old or new pieces, known or unknown, to this wonderful canine critic, produced the same effect.

So I might range up and down the quadruped creation, from the least to the greatest, and find in all a taste for music, which practice frequently develops into something marvelous.

But, after all, what is the knowledge acquired by these poor creatures, though seemingly wonderful, when compared with the wild music of the eagle as he screams in the clouds? Or what is it beside the still and silver hymn of some solitary forest-bird, which was born with the golden tongue of song?—which enraptured the mother bird with its voice ere it could bear itself from the nest with its little wings? Your domestic animals, after much

training, may flutter through a few incomplete notes to the wonder of the curious; but the song-bird of the forest pours, from its tongue of fire, an incessant gladness—a music that is as complete and divine as the ear of man could wish to listen to—a music which, even to the end, uplifts and inspirits the soul of the philosopher and the poet.

6



XVI.

Music of Spring.



WELCOME, sweet goddess of a genial clime,
To Western lands. The woods, at thy approach,
Swell into blooming beauty ; and the touch
Of thy ethereal wand awakes the streams.
The Mountain, in his snowy slumber, dreams
He feels thy breath, and hears thy voice sublime.

Lo, where the farmer, monarch of the soil,
Lord of the wheaten sheaf, renews his toil !
All-bounteous Heaven pours out, in generous rains,
The kindly nourishment to fields and plains.
. . . . What sound is that ? It falls upon my ear
Like the faint music of another sphere :—
Awake, my soul, and drink the enchanting strains !

O, silvan heralds of the dawning Spring—
Ye woodland vocalists, thus ever sing !

Yours are the strains that soothe the drooping heart,
Yours are the strains that cause the soul to fling
Away the bonds of sorrow, and take wing
To realms of purer bliss. Stay—why depart,
Inspiring harmonists, this earthly shore?
Stay yet awhile, and cheer this weary breast,—
For, ah! perchance ere Spring hath gone to rest
These feet may press the bosom of the earth no more.



XVII.

The Beautiful Brook.



IN the Beautiful Brook there 's a pleasant place,
Where the mud-turtle warbles his note—
Where the tadpole wiggles his tail with grace,
And the bullfrog tunes his throat,
With a voice so marvelous sweet and loud,
That it seems to descend from the fading cloud.

That beautiful spot, with its turtles and toads,
With its breezes that bore along
The breath of violets from the woods,
And the note of the wild-bird's song,
Was the daily resort of my boyish years,—
And I think of it often with happy tears!

A short bridge spanned the Beautiful Brook,—
I see it as in a dream!—
Where Bennie, and I, and little Tot Cooke
Fished for tadpoles in the stream;
But the tadpoles were shy, and from morn to night
We angled in vain for a single bite.



That good old time was a happy time,
When Bennie, and Tot, and I,
Kept noisy time to the bullfrog's rhyme,
As we fished for the tadpoles shy.
O, the wild woods rung as we wildly sung—
To the turtles' dismay the reeds among!

Now little Tot Cooke is withered and old,—
The changes of time, ah me!—
And Bennie, an oysterman stout and bold,
Has a home by the far-off sea;
In the Beautiful Brook other tadpoles play,—
And the short-span bridge is rotted away.

For me will the gentle bullfrog sing
Ah! never, nevermore!—
I am borne on Time's relentless wing
Far away from my native shore:
Yet still would I there breathe my final sigh,
And in my last hour hear the mud-turtle cry!



XVIII.

The Mocking-Bird.



Is it the spirit of some distant star
Waking such melody? Or do I sleep,
And feel this ecstasy in sunny dreams?
No: 't is the mocking-bird—
The winged Apollo of the shade—
The silvan soul of melody,
Who pours his melting tones
Into the listening ear of gaudy Day,
As well as to the sober-featured Night.

O, holiest offspring of the gentle Wood!
Enchanting bird! we welcome to our shores,
With the first footprints of th' advancing Spring,
Thy stirring song. As the clear melody
Of thy soul-rapturing music fills the breeze,
The plowman, at his toil, a time shall pause,
And, with delighted bosom, catch the strains.
The tranced sea, as thy soft music leaps
Across his trembling waters, shall stand still
Awhile, until the Eolian sweetness dies;

Then shall he lift his mighty bosom up,
 And breathe a tender sigh upon the winds,
 As if he wished thy heavenly harmonies
 Would ceaselessly roll o'er his heaving breast.

I listen, too, glad voice of melody!
 Until my soul grows plaintive with thy song,
 And all my nerves pulsate with harmony!
 O, then the Past, the Present, and the Future
 Are interwined in my inmost heart,
 And fill my being with influences of Love—
 Love that surrounds me like a wondrous dream.

But soft! thy voice fades in yon hollow grove,
 Like some stray sunbeam lost in Wintery clouds,
 Or Friendship's smile when adverse storms are near.
 Is such the silence which pervades the soul
 When happy voices die?

O, sing again—


Sing while this genial season lasts, sweet bird!
 For soon, alas! the ungentle Winter, charged
 With bitter airs, and clothed in fleecy shroud,
 Shall drape with gloom the starry halls of heaven,
 And sing thy requiem to a listening world!

When the last lingering sweets of Autumn melt
 In Winter's dreary waves,
 What happy, golden clime,
 Minstrel Elysian-born,
 Shall listen to the echoes of thy voice?

XIX.

To a Bird:

HEARD IN THE WOODS AT TWILIGHT.

IRD of the silken wing,
Sing, airy spirit, sing
Thy joyous lay ;
While o'er the mountain rim
Comes the night, faint and dim,
Sing thy delightful hymn
To dying day !

Dear spirit-bird, thy art
Melteth the saddened heart
Sweetly away,
When in the solitude
Of the gray twilight wood,
Of the star-circled wood,
Echoes thy lay.

O, I could dwell in some
Wood, where the city's hum
 Never is heard,
Might I there hear the note
Of thy sweet-swelling throat—
And on its music doat
 Ever, blithe bird !

In thy air-haunted grove,
Gay-hearted bird of love,
 Pleased would I lie ;
Under thy waving nest,
There would I take my rest—
There, 'neath thy hanging nest,
 Breathe my last sigh.

And in the night of death—
Mystic night, when the breath
 Leaveth its clay—
Musical spirit, then
From its clay prison-den
Would my soul soar, and blend
 With thy pure lay.

XX.

The Midnight Bird.



THE owl is hooting in the old belfry !
The Moon clings to the ragged spire of the steeple,
And gathers her robes of golden glory about her,
As if to shut out the breeze of the shivering midnight.
Click upon click, o'er the roof of the deserted manse,
Steal fainter and fainter the steps of belated grimalkin :
The timorous echo awakes with a sigh as he crouches,
Step after step, over the decaying roof-tree,
And fades, like the ghost of a sad thought, in the still
distance.

Out of the dark wood, lonely—ah ! lonely and dreary !—
Floats the clear voice of that wildering bird of the wild-
wood,
Whose melody wrings from the heart olden memories.
In the far midnight, when unstained and eloquent silence
Utters her discourse of love and of hope for the morrow,
Or beckons the sorrowful shades of the Past to our
presence,



Comes the weird voice of this sprite of the gloomy old
forest.

Tales does it tell, as it sings in the solitude holy,
Of friends that once walked with us in the still hours of
the midnight,

And laughed at its voice as it echoed, enchantingly echoed,
Over the hills, along the high cliffs, through the valleys.
And came to our ears in multitudinous music.

O, sad is its song to-night—lonely and sad is its calling—
Its calling for joys that have faded forever and ever !
While o'er yon brown hill that shines dim in the beautiful
starlight,

Its voice drops to silence,—as melts in the bosom of
heaven

The moonbeam, o'ercome by the cloud and the mist of
the morning,—

My soul longs to follow this bird on its shimmering path-
way,

To nestle with it in all its seclusion and quiet,

Far from the terror and turmoil of life, and forever

Rest with it, peacefully, in the still depths of the wil-
derness !

XXI.

A Morning Wish.



SOMETIMES I wish I were a morning lark ;
For O, how pleasant it would be to wing
My flight among the lazy clouds, and sing
Some airy hymn, to chide away the dark !
And I have thought it would afford to me
A thrill of holy rapture, when the sun,
With his wide wand of light, waved off the dun
And lingering shades, to wander in the sea
Of golden glory which the lord of day
Poured o'er the vales and mountains far away !
There, as the sunshine streamed upon my breast,
Warming my heart to music, I could sing
In highest hope, till weary grew my wing,—
Then sink, in joyful silence, to my nest.

XXII.

Domestic Tableau.



GRANDDAD hobbled into the house very early this evening, with a great gleam of exultation upon his venerable physiognomy. His wrinkles seemed to have had a dozen years at least smoothed out of them, and his bald forehead glowed with the fervor of better days. My boy Ned followed him, chirruping gaily, as he invariably does when something has tickled his baby fancy.

“How now!” cried I; “what is the matter with you, pretty ones? Have you found a pot of gold at the end of some rainbow, or a bottle of the famed elixir of immortality, that you thus shine out this evening?”

“Neither, neither!” they both cried simultaneously, the words tumbling and rolling over each other like rollicking boys at play,—“we ’ve killed a hawk!”

“Killed a hawk!”

Now came our turn to laugh—mine and my wife Neibelungen’s—and we did so without stint. The idea of my boy Ned, hardly capable of wielding a whip for his top, and my grandsire Dominic, whose voice piped in childish

treble, and who had apparently no more than sufficient strength to raise his crutch—the idea, I say, of these two innocent beings killing a strong and active bird of the hawk genus, was too much for Neibelungen and me, and we cachinated derisively.

“Come, come, now, granddad, tell us all about it,” we finally suggested.

“If you don’t believe it,” said the old gentleman, “come into the yard, and see for yourselves.”

Happy thought, that of the old man. To be sure, if they had killed a hawk, its carcass might be taken as evidence. So out we all went.

And the hawk was there, sure enough.

Dead as a door-nail.

The chickens were shying away from its not very amiable-looking remains, though a huge Shanghai hen was ruffling her feathers above the dead bird as if rejoicing over its downfall.

It appears that the hawk had descended from his aerial flight to steal a chicken. Unfortunately that chicken was the offspring of one of the most fierce and unconquerable of Shanghai mothers. Unwilling to see the results of her laborious incubation thus torn from her, she darted ferociously upon the hawk, who would have overpowered her, had not Ned and granddad opportunely made their appearance. The one with a stone, and the other with his crutch, soon finished the struggles of the voracious bird; and its carcass now adorns my barn-door, a fearful example to others of the same species.

We stood gazing for a few moments at the hawk in

profound silence. Granddad leaned forward upon his crutch, and looked into my face with an expression that denoted pleasure at his ability to triumph over my doubts. Ned had his foot upon the bird's wing, as if he feared it might come to life, and struggle again into its native empyreal. I looked sagaciously at the Shanghai hen, who was gathering her chickens under her wing, occasionally looking toward her dead enemy, nervously. Neibelungen stood, with her sleeves rolled up, her arms akimbo, a rolling-pin in one hand and a cake-cutter in the other. It was a beautiful family tableau.

Ned finally broke the silence.

"Pa," quoth he, "what makes the hawks come down to fight the hens?"

"My son," said I, in the simplest form of language I could command—I always like to be clear in my talk with the little ones—"my son, you mistake the design of the hawk in leaving its accustomed flight in the blue ether. The hawk, sir, is a bird of prey."

My boy meditated for a few moments. He seemed to be questioning and discussing, mentally, the fact asserted by his accommodating parent. At length a thought struck him.

"Are the hawks the chickens' preachers, pa?"

"Do listen to the child!" exclaimed Neibelungen. "What can he mean?"

"Why, pa says they are birds of prey,—and may be it has been praying with the chickens, and we've been wicked to kill this 'un."

"Not bad, Ned. You'll soon be as smart as your

daddy, if you improve thus," said I. "But the hawk preys *on* the chickens, and not *with* them. As you grow older, my dear boy," continued I, laying my hand encouragingly on his head, "you will learn more."

Ned seemed to be satisfied with this incontrovertible affirmation, and looked at his sire with an unconscious air of worshipping him as a modern Solon.

"Ned," continued I, "I must put you through a small course of Natural History. True, you are young—very young, indeed, I may say. But your mind is as plastic as potter's clay. It will easily receive and retain whatever impression is made upon it, and as it grows older and hardens in the rugged atmosphere of worldly experience, that impression will be indelibly affixed. Time and study have taught me this, my son: the older a man becomes the less rapidly he learns, and the less firmly his mind holds that which it does learn. Take the mind when it is soft and yielding to the touch—stamp upon it keenly and persistently whatever theory you may, and, though the child may not know the influence of that theory, the man will. As he reaches mature years the teachings of his youth are constantly assuming new forms. Each succeeding year he sees them in a different and higher light; and in the full noon of manhood, they burst upon him with every point and saliency of their shape revealed, either as hideous things to be rejected, or as grand ideas leading the spirit to loveliness and joy. Do you understand me, my son?"

Ned was leaning against me, his arm clasped around my leg. He was sound asleep.

“Neibelungen, put the boy to bed. I have at least given him a sedative.”

Neibelungen did as I desired, and the innocent breathing of the lad upon his couch filled my paternal bosom with the joyous anticipation that Ned would never dabble in railroad stocks, nor stand as a candidate for Congress.



XXIII.

Morning— Noon.



O! where Aurora, crowned with dew,
With misty locks and robe of blue,
Comes from her starlit bowers ;
She waves her banner light on high,
With roses strews the blushing sky,
And leads in brighter hours.

The Sun-king dons his robe of light,
And from the starry arms of Night,
In glory, breaks away ;
He smiles upon the humble rose,
Breathes joy to every stream that flows,
And crowns the happy Day.

O, proudly glow the mist-wreathed hills,
And gladly laugh melodious rills,
Each vale and wood adorning !
The eagle joys at parted even,
And seeks the gleaming gates of heaven,
To welcome in the Morning !



* * * * *

How silent sleeps the silvery lake !
No wave disturbs its shining breast ;
Nor sound is heard in tree or brake,—
All Nature is at rest.

The birds, retired from noonday heat,
Sit silent in the leafy bower ;
Great Nature's pulse hath ceased to beat—
So still the noontide hour !

The reaper from his toil repairs,
The forest's cooling shade to woo,
Where earth a fairer aspect wears,
And heaven a cooler blue.

Thus let me seek the silent grove,
Where rills sing sweetly to the trees,
And roses, in their generous love,
Give fragrance to the breeze.

Reclining on some mossy seat,
Let Contemplation be my friend :
Say, is not noonday's fervid heat
Designed for some good end ?

Let no complaining mortal rail
'Gainst Him who made the earth and skies ;
This Summer noon by One was sent
Whose ends are always wise.

XXIV.

The Setting Sun.



FARE in the dim, untrodden West the weary Sun
retires,
And sends athwart the burning sky his cloud-
reflected fires ;
See how the distant mountains catch the glory of his
beams,
And bright beneath his dying ray the mountain torrent
gleams.

Farewell, departing orb of Day,— the dewy Twilight
Hour,
At thy last sigh, with pensive eye, weeps in her starry
bower ;
Another world, bright-beaming orb, receives thy cherished
light,
And we are soothed in slumber by the shadow-crownèd
Night.

Yet brief—O, passing brief—will be the Night-Queen's
solemn reign,
And thou wilt mount thy radiant throne upon the hills
again ;
The birds and glowing streams will hail with joy the
opening day,
And dew-drops leave the weeping flowers to mingle in
thy ray.



Ah ! there are souls who, yester eve, beheld thy fading
beams,—
They dwell not on the earth to-day entranced in sunny
dreams ;
Thy car no more for them shall sink in Thetis' watery bed ;
To them are lost thy rising rays—for they are with the
dead !

XXV.

A Summer Shower.



THE cool rain droppeth from the dropping clouds,
And Earth with joy the gracious gift receives.
As the meek Woods, in crisp and parchèd leaves,
Raise their glad heads—behold! the vapory shrouds
Bear off in balm, like shallops o'er the main.
The rills, and hills, and forests breathe again
With happy music,—bright-eyed Phœbus shakes
His golden censer o'er a sparkling world.
The tree-toad's piping breaketh from the brakes;
The mellifluous bull-frogs leave the lakes,
To cool themselves amid the rain-impearled
Reeds that sway softly in the laughing light.
The world is gladsome, and the sky is bright,—
The valley glows, and glows the mountain hight!

XXVI.

Green Peas.



AMONG the many attractive and delicious vegetables which my country garden affords, green peas are the most savory. Neibelungen plucks them from the vine in their adolescence, before they have grown insipid with the harassments which time always brings to vegetable, as well as human, nature. This morning, while the dew had barely vanished from the sunniest places, the partner of my bosom plucked a mess of these rare pods, which, if he could have lived to enjoy their odor as they came from the bush, would have caused Apicius' gourmand lips and eyes to overflow with pleasure.

Neibelungen's practiced eye detects the pea in its virgin innocence—in its unalloyed babyhood—just after it has bloomed into palpitating life, its little form all soft and pulpy and abiding in the richest juices. Then she goes into the garden, and divorcing the sweet morsel from its parent stock, she strips it of its tough robes, and prepares it for the fire. At noon it appears upon the table, with squirrel-pie and cranberry marmalade,—a most tempting picture to the epicurean vision. There it is—swimming

in sweet butter and golden cream, all warm and glowing from Neibelungen's skillful manipulations—a feast fit for gods and goddesses.

I would, for the benefit of my readers, give a detailed account of the manner in which my better-half prepares this Summer delicacy; but the majority of the fair sex would say, "Pshaw! that is not new; we get up peas that way ourselves!"

It is not the simply mechanical mode of arranging and cooking that makes the pea the sovereign of table luxuries. Keats, Shelley, and Byron, mechanically, prepared their intellectual feasts in very much the same manner as did their Grub-street contemporaries. But they had the genius to array language in its most delightful forms, and to infuse the thoughts which every body has in common with a rich and divine savor that ordinary mortals are incompetent to understand. She who puts the pea upon the table all lusciously and unctuously swelling with marrowy sweetness, is the genius of the culinary department. To the ordinary looker-on she prepares it in the ordinary manner; but, by some incomprehensible *hocus-pocus*, her cookery results in a dish of undefinable finish—exact and complete in its harmony of shape and flavor. You could nothing add to or subtract from the edible without resolving it among those commonplaces of the table which have so little relish to the critical appetite.

If there is any thing that the partner of my joys and sorrows has studied, it is the kitchen. She has ranged up and down the full gamut of cookery. She understands the keys of the palate far better than her refined and

fascinating sister, Adelgatha, understands the keys of her two-thousand-dollar piano, whose melodies came pretty near luring my susceptible heart ere I began to value the unassuming qualities of the less brilliant sister.

Most persons are great in but one thing. The individual who has several irons in the fire may, by great dexterity, succeed in making passable workmanship out of the whole set. But you must give your undivided attention to one iron, if you would manufacture something worthy of praise. Neibelungen is a disciple of this school of sentiment. If she had given her attention to poetry, I believe she would have rivaled "Amelia." If she had given her time to music, Parepa would have begun to keep an eye on her laurels. But her dear, kind little heart had no such lofty desires. It panted for an unrivaled nook in the bosom of husband and children. After attaining its wishes, that dear little heart induced the active brain of its possessor to do every thing for the amusement and benefit of an appreciative family. Marrowfat peas are the lyrics that breathe forth their delight; the broom and the washboard yield dearer music than the piano; a neat house and unsullied linen are epics grander than those of Milton; kind words and sweet deeds of love to all around are dramas that have more majesty than any of Shakspeare's.

Little Ned is always darting in doors from his play to ask for a "piece" between meals, so when he comes to the table his appetite is gone; but, if the peas are there, he thinks he has room left for them. His young palate is thus early beginning to hanker for that which is delicate and digestive. Granddad has past into the "sere and

yellow leaf;" but that which generally accompanies old age, as loss of feeling, a want of appreciation of the good things of this life, still remains with him. Neibelungen chains him goldenly to the pleasures of life by her delightful cookery. She titillates his failing appetite by the flavor of her delicious preparations. She woos him back to the excellences of life by her superior culinary blandishments. After a meal, produced by her labors, in which the green pea has stood preëminent, his eye glimmers with the old boyhood's radiance, his face reddens roseately, and he moves from the table to his accustomed seat in the out-door shadow with a lighter crutch.

Blessed be the man who discovered the green pea! May he reside in Paradise with the houris, each one of whom shall be capable of working his discovery into a perpetual luxury! Or better even than this, may he be permitted to return to earth again, and sit in the fair Summers with Ned, granddad, Neibelungen, and the writer hereof, and taste the savors of their table. I could wish him no greater enjoyment.

Some ladies—very handsome ladies, and good cooks, too—have no more idea of the qualities of a green pea than an undevout astronomer has of the important lesson taught by his sidereal inquiries. They have no genius for catching the pea in that mysterious condition when it revels in the hight of its juicy raptures. They know and care not how soon after plucking it should be shelled and potted. They know not when and what quantity of unguents and condiments to mingle with it over the fire. At what time to snatch it from the vessel in which it is

growing up to proper deliciousness is to them a hidden mystery; and it goes steaming from their hands to the table a tasteless, insipid food, that neither men nor gods would give a sigh for. To such I would say: Leave the pea alone! O, put not the germ in the earth, to spring up in disgrace. Leave it to those who know its value, and when to find it in its better moods.

8



XXVII.

Gossip after Peas.



SMILE not, pleasant reader ! There is such a thing as degrees of ability in cooking. There are plenty of educated and accomplished women who do not know how to cook a turnip—not to mention peas—and there are ladies, too, without many fashionable accomplishments, who, by some incomprehensible instinct, make perfect and delicious every dish which passes under their hands.

The turnip, for instance, as usually placed upon the table, is the most insipid of food. But master-spirits in the culinary art can give it a flavor that would almost tempt a Bacchus from his cups. It is not necessary, I think, that a vegetable, in itself tasteless, should be permitted to rest upon its own merits as an edible. A scientific cook will make it the basis of a good dish, as the ancients were in the habit of doing. The ancients, indeed, in those days of luxuriance when Greece was at the height of its wealth and power, had reduced cooking to a niceness which some very wonderful gastronomers of our own day have not attained.

The cook, in the old times, for his rare talent in preparing food for the table, was dignified by the name of Professor—very properly, too—and he who discovered a new dish was crowned with honors, and trumpeted by fame in the verses of the laureate. Thus many men of the best ability, uninfluenced by that glory which attaches to the successful artist, warrior, or poet, were proud to immortalize their names by the invention of a poignant sauce or popular confection.

Apicius and Austoxenes were both professors of cooking. They did not labor in the kitchen, certainly; but they exercised their ingenuity in the production of delicacies to please the palate. One was the inventor of a cake which went by his name, and the other got up a seasoning for hams, which will make his name last till the day arrives when Jerusalem is repopulated by the peoples of earth, and hogs again become unclean.

Archestratus I must mention, for he composed a poem on gastrology, and the system therein propounded became the creed of the epicures. He gave his whole mind—a good, strong, critical mind had Archestratus—to culinary questions. He traveled much in various lands, eating of every dish, analyzing the quality and flavor of its ingredients, criticising keenly its every attribute, and gave his opinion upon its defects and virtues with the zest of a statesman. Among his disciples—and who was not a disciple of Archestratus in that voluptuous age?—his precepts were regarded as codes which, rightly followed, would ameliorate the imperfect condition of society.

I spoke, a few sentences back, of making some common

vegetable, as the turnip, the basis of a dish. Our cooks should give more attention to this matter. They usually put the turnip, potato, or other vegetables, into a pot, boil them in some careless way, and place them before us at dinner, mashed or in quarters, with their little virtues boiled out of them. There is no food more wholesome or more simple; and yet how the cooks do torture and manipulate them, until the salutary properties of these *cibi innocentes* entirely disappear! And give them a partridge or a snipe, a veal-cutlet or a mutton-chop, and they will so dish you up each savory article that nothing of its original flavor shall be discernible.

Such, however, seems to be the fashion of the best cooks in every age. None of them are able to preserve the taste of edibles in the cooking. The French are celebrated as cooks; but the cuisine, under their administration, is only a curriculum of gastronomal art. They give to flesh and vegetables the most enticing artificial flavors, and do not pretend to preserve those which are natural to them.

The ancient professors of cookery practiced on the same plan. With a vegetable these remarkable artists could counterfeit the shape and the taste of fish and flesh in a manner that deceived the most accomplished glutton. But the best of them, if furnished with a mess of nice peas to cook, would never have thought of retaining the aroma of the esculent. They would have so disguised it with foreign material that the most analytical taste would have failed to find a simple bouquet of the original food.

When we come to consider the customs of various

peoples in the matter of eating, we will not wonder that the ancient professors of cooking have obtained so great celebrity among civilized modern nations. Athens, Rome, and the rich and learned colonies which sprang from those great commonwealths, cooked on a settled system. They had furnaces, ovens, stoves, saucepans, spits, and stew-pans. We, of course, could not relish all their dishes ; their taste and ours would be often at variance. But they were more decent and reasonable in their ordinary style of living than our British ancestors, who ate flesh in the manner of wolves, and swilled ale and mead like nothing on earth but their drunken, valiant selves. Rome taught them better things, but they were slow to learn the valuable lesson.

It is probable that the French cooks, however reluctant they might be to admit the fact, derived the very first principles of their art from intercourse with Italy. The Medicean queens of France brought many things with them to their adopted country—among others, poisons, perfumes, and cookery. Paris gradually began to take the lead in gastronomic science ; but it was not until the reign of Louis the Magnificent that it reached its renown.

In the mean time, of other national kitchens, the unctuous Spanish one, with its dishes redolent of oil and garlic, was the most remarkable. Russia could offer few native delicacies to the traveler ; a miserable mess of cabbage-soup, caviare, quasi, and pickled herrings being the chief productions of her indigenous artists. Holland, again, invented little save water-souchée, the boast of Low Country tables ; and though the British and the Spanish

colonies had many a delicious titbit in the shape of fish or fowl, the dressing was inferior to the material.

Turkish cookery, using the word in its broadest sense, so as to take in all the settled Mohammedan nations of West Asia, was more original in its conceptions. Without dwelling on the lambs roasted whole, and stuffed with fruit, with spices, and occasionally with drugs, for the sake of a new flavor, the pilaff demands attention. A pilaff—which is neither ragout, nor mince-meat, nor even hotch-potch, but a wondrous mingling of all three—is just the succulent, greasy dish to suit the appetite of an Asiatic. Then the kabobs, well seasoned, broiled on skewers of jasmine or arbutus, and eaten without the help of forks, are certainly the poetry of mutton. Rissoles are as deftly made, and soups as skillfully thickened, by turbaned men as by the neatest-handed Phillis of the West. Lastly, the cucumber stuffed, not with pearls, but with rice and minced fowl, is a delight to the voyager who is so lucky as to be well grounded in his “Arabian Nights” before leaving the nursery.

The dishes of the Asiatics are much superior, indeed, to those of many other nations, if we may believe the accounts of travelers.

In China, for example, the cooks have invented some queer dishes. Among these a foremost place must be given to soup compounded from sharks’ fins, so that they import every year from India twelve to fifteen thousand hundredweight of them. Off Kurrachee, near Bombay, about forty thousand sharks are annually offered up to John Chinaman’s eccentric taste. Then the rats!—

Bird's nests, too, supply the materials of a very fashionable soup. Those used are the nests of the *Hirundo esculenta*. The gathering of these nests, which are procured from caves on the southerly coast of Java, takes place three times a year—in the end of April, the middle of August and December. They are said by those who have indulged in them to be composed of a mucilaginous substance; but as yet they have never been analyzed with sufficient accuracy to show the constituents. Externally they resemble ill-concocted, fibrous isinglass, and are of a white color, inclining to red. John Chinaman has quite a strange *penchant* for dogs. This predilection is also shared by the ladies and gentlemen of Zanzibar, in Africa, the aristocracy of the Sandwich Islands, and the half-mannish, half-brutish aborigines of Australia.

These Sandwich dogs are fed with peculiar nicety, and are considered fit for market when two years old. The mode in which they are cooked is somewhat peculiar. A hole is dug in the ground large enough to contain the puppy. A good fire is built in this hole, and large stones cast into it, to remain until red-hot. You then pile these red-hot stones about the sides and bottom, throw in leaves of odorous plants, and lay the dog, well cleaned and carefully prepared, upon the glowing stones. More leaves, more stones, and, finally, some earth, are heaped upon the smoking dainty, until the oven becomes, as it were, hermetically sealed. The meat, when done, is full of delicious juices.

Fashion, in Siam, prescribes a curry of ant's eggs as necessary to every well-ordered banquet. These eggs are

not larger than grains of pepper ; and to an unaccustomed palate have no particular flavor. Besides being curried, they are brought to table rolled in green leaves, mingled with shreds of very fine slices of fat pork.

The Mexicans make a species of bread of the eggs of hemipterous insects, which frequent the fresh waters of the Mexican lagunes.

The Bushmen of Africa indulge in roasted spiders ; maggots tickle the palates of the Australian aborigines ; the Chinese feast upon the chrysalis of the silk-worm ; and the Digger Indians are said to be very fond of skunk-meat, or any thing they can lay their hands upon.

The Brazilians, like our own paunchy aldermen, have a passion for turtle. They have several ways of cooking it. Steaks cut from the breast and roasted make an excellent dish ; the lean parts are roasted on spits, and sausages are made of the stomach, while the entrails serve as the basis of soup. The most usual method of preparation, however, is the simple one of boiling the turtle in his own shell, or in kettles full of the juice of the mandioca root. Newly hatched turtles, with the remains of the yolk still inside them, are reckoned especially delicious, and numbers of immature turtles are sacrificed to this taste.

The inhabitants of the Phillippine Islands indulge in frogs as a peculiar edible delicacy. After the rains, says a traveler, they are taken from the ditch that encompasses the walls of Manilla, in great numbers, for they are then fat, in good condition for eating, and make an admirable curry. The French are considered as *the* frog-eaters, and

it is not so wonderful that even so finished and fashionable a people should be fond of these ugly, but delicious, animals, when their edible virtues are taken into consideration.

The doctors of old had great faith in frog's flesh, as at once restorative, diluent, analeptic, and antiscorbutic, and invaluable in cases of consumption and affections of the chest. Pliny says frogs boiled in vinegar are an excellent remedy for the toothache. Dioscorides recommended them to be cooked in salt and oil as an antidote to serpent poison; and another ancient physician cured a fistula, or said he did, by administering a frog's heart every morning as a pill.

But it was not until the middle of the sixteenth century that the frog obtained a place at civilized dinner-tables. Even now, French epicures confine themselves to dishes composed of the hind-quarters of the little reptile, dressed in wine, or served with white sauce. The particular species in favor for culinary purposes is that known as the *Rana esculenta*, or green frog, although the red frog is eaten in some places, and thought in no way inferior to his more popular relative. The frog is in the best condition for the table in Autumn, just when he takes to water for the Winter, but is mostly eaten in Spring, for the simple reason that he is easier caught at that season. He is captured in several ways: sometimes by means of lines baited with scarlet cloth, sometimes a net is used, sometimes a rake, or he is pursued at night with torches. A hundred years ago, a shrewd native of Auvergne made a fortune by farming a frog-preserve, from which he

supplied the capital. Similar nurseries help to supply the modern demand for this peculiar luxury; but that demand is gradually decreasing, although, at certain times of the year, plenty of frogs may be seen in both French and Italian markets. I believe the American frog does not need much cultivation. He grows naturally in our bull-frog ponds to suit the table, and is a rare and savory dish. In our fashionable restaurants, on hot Summer days, he may be seen on exhibition, stripped to his white flesh, and sitting cozily and temptingly in heaps of ice on a China dish.

Dr. Livingstone speaks eulogistically of a large African frog, called the matlametlo, of which his children partook with eagerness and delight. This monster frog measures nearly half a foot, with a breadth of four and a half inches, and, when cooked, looks very much like a chicken. After a thunder-shower, the pools, even in the dryest parts of the African desert, are alive with matlametloes; and the natives, not unnaturally, believe that they are born of the thunder-cloud, and descend to the earth with the rain. During the season of drought, the matlametlo takes up his abode in a hole of his own making at the root of certain bushes; and as he seldom emerges from his retreat, a large variety of spider spins his web across the orifice, and provides the tenant gratuitously with a screen. But the gift often proves a fatal one, serving to guide the hungry Bushman to the reptile's hiding-place. The matlametlo would make a worthy companion-dish to the bull-frog, which is considered equal to fowl wherever eaten.

Among the various temptations to extravagance to be

seen in the Siamese market-places, nothing astonished the traveler Turpin more than a number of hideous, ball-shaped toads, spitted ready for the cook. Judging from the supply, there would seem to be a general demand for the *han-han*—a name given to this edible toad in imitation of its cry, which is so loud that two of them are sufficient “to disturb a whole country.” The common toad is habitually eaten by Africans, to whom, in fact, nothing comes amiss in the shape of food; and there is small doubt that it is often substituted for the frog in countries where frog-eating prevails.

Concerning the modes of cooking food, we might learn much, if we should travel with the voyager through various countries, in the past and the present. Arab cooking, you may be surprised to learn, is carried on almost entirely on camel-back, and on the march. Perched on the high camel-saddles, the women shake the light churn of goat’s hide until the milk coagulates into curdy butter; they mix flour with water, and knead up a paste, which is molded into thin cakes. These cakes, with the aid of a chafing-dish of burning charcoal and a flat iron plate, are baked into bread, which is eaten, hot and fresh, with the improvised butter and a handful of dates, by the tawny-complexioned men trudging painfully beside the line of laden beasts. That is enough sustenance for the every-day life of the frugal Bedouin. On high holidays, when a feast is called for, a hole is dug in the ground; it is filled with charcoal and large stones, and fire is kindled until the stones are red-hot. Then a whole sheep, stuffed with pistachio-nuts, rice, raisins, or nothing, is thrust in, with

its woolly skin intact, and baked until it is fit for the palates of its uncritical proprietors.

Uncivilized people, destitute of those utensils in metal and clay, which are so familiar to us as to appear commonplace, are put to strange shifts when they would dine on roast meat. The Arab oven of stones is perfectly well known to the Hottentots and Caffres of South Africa, to the New Zealander, the Typee Cannibal, and the natives of Madagascar. But most untamed races resort to a sharpened wooden spit, and a broil before a fire ; and the savage hunters of Central America simply inclose a Honduras turkey in soft clay, and bake the mass till it cracks.

Europe, you may be sure, went through many stages before its ordinary progress culminated in French refinements and cookery. The banquets of our early European ancestors are enough to give a modern reader a sharp twinge of dyspepsy. The huge ruddy joints, twirling languidly before a fierce fire of crackling logs, the platters heaped with half-roasted meat, the barbaric plenty and coarse sensualism, were worthy of those coarse ages. The rude Vikings were too hungry to wait until their great masses of beef were roasted to a judicious brownness. They snatched the ribs and sirloins from the spit ; they hacked the meat with daggers, tore it piccemeal, gnawed it savagely, like hounds breaking up their game, and concluded the festive repast by pelting one another, or some butt or prisoner, with their marrowbones and leavings. Was not an Archbishop of Canterbury absolutely *boned* to death in this manner by the Pagan Danes, who held his grace a captive in his own cathedral ?

Since then, how rapidly have we improved, in England, Germany, France, and America. France, indeed, sets an example for all of us in the art of cooking. The French women can conjure up a meal that shall be at once frugal and good of its kind. And so with French soldiers. A stray Zouave or Chasseur will kindle his fire, improvise his oven, and dress a dinner under the most wretched circumstances—very like tossing omelets out of a helmet, and compounding savory stews in a shaving-can. The French, indeed, are a nation of epicures, fastidious and voluptuous in their eating, though brave and patient as Spartans when in the field of battle. Count the dishes of the distinguished Carême—what a brain that Frenchman must have had!—and of his pupil Francatelli, no less distinguished, and you may behold the true genius which exists in the profession of cooking.

American cookery is not as far advanced artistically as that of France. We have not yet made cookery a branch of esthetics, though Professor Blot has given us some nice lessons in the art. But we are progressing. At least we ought to be; for I enter no lady friend's house without finding a cook-book on the library. The turkey seems to be the American epicure's dish; and I had almost thought it a bird of this clime alone, till I read my Shakespeare closely. When the great poet makes Gower describe Pistol as swelling like a turkey-cock, and Fabian say of Malvolio, "Contempt makes a rare turkey-cock of him—how he jets under his advanced plumes!" we may assume that Globe audiences were able to appreciate the comparisons. So we learn from the exclamation of the

carrier—I Henry vi—"Odsbody! the turkeys in my panier are quite starved!" that they formed no uncommon part of his load, and were probably as familiar to English poultry-yards in the Elizabethan era as to those of our own day and country.

But since the Englishman is so enthusiastic in his roast-beef and plum-pudding as to be all but regardless of the glorious turkey, we have set down this bird as the prime Yankee dish, and especially of the Western States, for great festive occasions. The "Christmas turkey" is our proverbial expression. This fowl has been, and is, cooked in every possible way: stuffed with chestnuts, filled with forcemeat, crammed with mushrooms and oysters; and ham, tongue, bacon, pickled pork, and sausages have been called to add zest to his delicate flesh. The Provençals impart an oily taste to it by feeding the bird on whole walnuts. Soyer would have him fattened by five weeks' feeding on a paste of mashed potatoes, buckwheat flour, Indian corn, and barley; while Parmentier says that to obtain all possible advantage from the turkey, they must be killed at the same time as pigs; then cut the turkey in quarters, and put them in earthen pots covered over with the fat of the pork, and by this means they may be eaten all the year round.

The American girls know how to cook the fowl for a Christmas dinner; although there be many skeptics who insist that none of the girls of our day—or very few of them—know how to cook any thing. There is, too truly, a class of young women who think cooking vulgar—the more 's the pity! If to render food tender, wholesome,

easy of digestion, to preserve and develop natural flavors, to add aroma to azmozone, to combine the choicest products of the animal and the vegetable world, be the true offices of the cook, we fear our girls—fond as they are of picnics, and balls, and flimsy accomplishments—are not far advanced in kitchen lore. The genius which is required to cook a vegetable, few of them possess. They may be able to paint a presentable picture, or make a tolerable statue, or flirt with grace; but in the kitchen they are awkward and careless, and sometimes, I had almost said, disgusting.

My friend Wat Wingate—a Queen City artist of wealth and distinction—will never get married, because, as he says, he can't find an intelligent, educated woman who understands how to cook a meal. Wat believes, with a certain ancient philosopher, that "voluptuousness is the sovereign good;" so he taboos a wife, and hires his cooks, with the idea that a man can not turn off his wife when she does not suit him, as he can a salaried cook,—and that there will be no taste to please but his own in the arrangement of the table. The whole object of life, in my friend's view, is eating. Domestic ties are nought in comparison with a "good square meal." A great, heavy-headed, flabby, bloated mountain of flesh, his heart is so deeply buried beneath cushions of adipose matter, that it can respond to nothing sweeter and more endearing than the clangor of the bell announcing the approach of his food. Wat does not even walk to his meals. He sits in an easy chair, with one gouty, well-wrapped foot on a soft pillow, from morning to morning, growling, like a huge

mastiff, at every thing in life, save when the dinner-bell rings. That is his happiest hour.

His trouble in getting cooks was formerly very frequent. But he has now in command of his kitchen, and has had for two or three years, a Frenchman, whose arrangement of a dinner gives entire satisfaction. I was present when my fat friend employed this artist. Our modern Epicurus had advertised in the daily papers for a cook. He had had many applications—Irish, German, and African—but none were able to answer his test question suitably: "Well, how do you cook a turnip?" For Wat thinks that the cook who knows how to cook a turnip in an artistic manner needs no further catechism. At last a flashily-dressed gentleman, with the finest broadcloth, cut to perfection, covering his graceful form, a perfect neck-tie, boots polished to the glitter of ebony, a thin wisp of a cane, jewelry of the *loudest* description, hair oiled to the kinkiest curl, and a voice sweet as a nightingale's, was announced. Wat thought this must be a French count, at the very least—if not a prince of the Napoleonic blood—and rang for his page to hand the gentleman a chair.

"To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?" asked my old friend, with his most courteous smile, when the guest was seated.

"You advertise for a cook," was the reply, in a sweet voice, with a French twang. "I come to see about the situation."

Wat's eyes opened. He contracted his brows, and resumed the natural look of Wat Wingate, the epicurean

critic. "Well, sir," said he, recurring to his standard question, "how do you cook a turnip?"

"There are many ways of cooking turnips, Monsieur. Shall I explain?"

This was a thoroughly practical answer, and my friend looked pleased.

"One way will be sufficient, for the present," replied Wat. "Select which you please."

"How would you like vol-au-vent?"

"I can not tell, till I know your system."

"Take a large, sound turnip," began Frenchy, with promptness, "cut it into pieces about the size of a franc-piece, put them into a pan, with brains of the star-fish, caught when the moon is at full; be careful to put in a proper amount of salt seasoning, and marjoram; fry on one side to a pale brown, turn and stew on the other side till it becomes pulp; take from the pan, and steam the whole in a cullender; then make some forcemeat and egg-balls, fry the former, put the whole into a brown gravy; flavor with parsley; fill the vol-au-vent, and serve immediately, hot. A little grated lemon-peel and dried thyme improves the flavor to some tastes!"

This sounded splendidly tempting, and Wat's eyes and lips moistened, as he inquired:

"What are your wages?"

"My salary," said Frenchy, with dignity, "is three thousand per annum, with lodging and clothing."

"Here, page; show him into the kitchen!"

Thus Wat got a cook who ought to be a professor of a new department of instruction in a female college. The

dish spoken of above was on Wat's table that day. I partook of the same, and must say that turnips *can*, by a superior cook, be wrought into a delectable dish.

Great would be the advantage to the community if cooking were made a branch of education. Cookery is a subject that the young ladies of the present day have never been taught to regard as worthy of their attention: indeed, rather as one to be avoided; for it is seldom discussed otherwise than apologetically, with a simpering sort of jocularity, or as something which it is "low" to know any thing about. A certain diplomatist, among a company of ladies, on being reminded that his mother was a cook, did not deny the fact, but assured the company, upon his honor, that "she was a very bad one,"—just as if not knowing how to cook well took away the disgrace.

A good many damsels, educated at our fashionable colleges, when they are promoted to wedlock, become instantly aware of the appalling fact, that their "early education has been neglected,"—and, practically, they must *go to school again*, or—awful catastrophe!—lose the love of their husbands. Some ladies go to work in real earnest then, and, by application and attention, learn how to make home homelike. But O, what a world of trouble, harassment, and ill-humor might have been avoided, if, with other accomplishments of the boarding-school, they had learned to cook! Some, however, never take pains to learn at all; nor ever visit the kitchen to look into its management and economy—they are above all this!

If we could only see what is going on at the dinner hour of such a lady—what a curious spectacle of waste,

discomfort, and ill-humor—we would shudder! The husband, at last, tired of his Barmecide feasts, takes to the nightly club, and makes up in drink for the deficiencies in food. Ardent spirits is the final resource of the balked appetite. This is a truth married ladies may do well to ponder. No woman can make a home what it ought to be, unless she rids herself of that pride which looks upon cooking as low, and uses every energy to become an adept in the art which makes life pleasurable. Man is an eating animal—and the more alluring the food which is placed before him, the more contented is he with himself and all around him.

The banquet-table, the festival, the quiet lunch at the basket-meeting, the meal in the cold, repellent boarding-house, the pleasant feast at home, with all its sweet influences—how each of these impress the character of man, and make or mar his happiness!

Let our boarding-schools look to this matter.

Soyer, in England, some years ago, gave an impetus to education in cooking which was very refining upon the female mind, fast dwindling into mawkish babyhood, in the study of boarding-school French and Italian, and the neglect of weightier matters. The American female mind needs rubbing up in the same way. I hope some Professor Blot may have his influence in the seminaries of our country, and that no young lady will be permitted to graduate without knowing how to cook a turnip on some scientific plan.

But a truce to what seems like scolding. There be plenty of women—for all that I have said—who are not

too proud to place the art of cooking among their other accomplishments.

Neibelungen's skill I know from long experience. I have enjoyed the results of her superior culinary education for years, from a caper-sauce to a codfish-ball, and assure you, on my word as an eater, that she is equal to the most luxurious and the most delicate repast—that she can place on the table in perfection whatever the appetite may crave.

Blessed—O, blessed indeed!—is the man whose other half's education grasps every range of that sublime art which so mastered the minds of the voluptuous Greeks, as to induce their poets to devote epics to its praises, and their statesmen to spend hours in enthusiastic worship at its shrine!

And blessed—supremely blessed—is the artist wife, whose husband's system, free from dyspepsy and spleen, can appreciate the production of her genius, whether it be the Christmas turkey-gobbler, luscious in its oyster stuffing, with aroma of sage, or that richest delicacy of the Summer solstice, the green pea!



XXVIII.

A Dream-Song.



HE lady sings,—and O, I hear
 In her delicious voice,
 A thousand things that make my heart
 Both sorrow and rejoice :
 The grasshopper, that leaps aloft,
 Clapping his wings, and singeth soft
 A glad refrain of hope and bliss,—
 O, happy song of love and bliss !—
 Is in her ringing voice.

She sings ! Within the bosky wood,—
 Dim, far, and desolate,—
 The red-bird chirrup mournfully
 For her benighted mate.
 He comes not—though the sun is set,
 And her soft wings with dew are wet.
 Sighing, she sits on yon high tree,
 Sighing, and chirruping mournfully
 For him, who lies in state,—

Who lies in state in the tufted grass,
The twilight Silences shrouding him,
And the brotherly stars coming up to his bier,
From their mountain palaces dim,—
Coming in shadow, coming in gloom—
With dewy tears, with light perfume
Of roses in the drifted grass ;
But bringing to her no hope, alas !
Who sighs in vain for him.

The lady sings ! Beside the lake
Which lies athwart the green,
With jeweled eyes and gaudy coat,
A Puck-like frog is seen.
O, list to him ! From his pouchèd throat
Bursts forth a loud, mellifluous note—
A liquid note, heavy and loud—
A prayer for yon uprising cloud
To sprinkle the thirsty green !—

To fall in rain—fall in rain—
And, like the lady's rhyme,
To rattle along the thirsty plain—
The merriest bells in chime ;
To patter in music among the leaves ;
To rollick in music upon the eaves ;
To roar across the eternal sea
Its organ thunder of melody,
Rich as the lady's rhyme !

Sing, lady mine!—See, in the East,
In bridal beauty, wakes
The loving Morn, and, kissing her lord,
The sleeping Earth, *he* wakes!
He wakes: from out its tented nook
The busy emmet comes to look
For the red-bird that has ceased to sing,
Who lies in state with folded wing;
And no song the silence breaks!

No happy song the silence shakes!
But, in the dusky wood,
A monster grim, and stark, and cold,
Stalks giant Solitude:—
He stalks, the unrivaled monarch there,
And, in the winding, wreathing air,
Horridly chuckles to hear no sound
In all the desolate gloom around—
Remorseless Solitude!

Thy voice is mute, O, lady mine!
Thy thrilling lips are mute;
But their tones still linger on my ear,
Like the lingering sighs of a lute;
The grasshopper still is hanging in air;
And the frog comes from his watery lair,
To wind his horn in the twilight breeze;
But thy voice, with the bird's that sang in the trees,
Is forever still and mute—
Forever still and mute!

XXIX.

The Moving World.



THE world is moving, moving, ever moving !
Going around steadily, as at Creation,
When Adam wept, and palely left the Garden,—
And Eve disconsolaté followed her bosom's lord,
Looking back at the sweet fruits, the rare-ripe berries,
The golden apples flaring in the twilight—
And the sweet scents that perfumed all the landscape :—
But over all the hovering cloud, black in its dismal augury !

The world is turning, turning, ever turning !—
Turning in light and shade, with tireless motion,
As once it turned when Cain, the jealous brother,
Did the black deed that blackened man forever !
The world turns round, and man, in painful agony,
Stretches his hands to heaven in mighty prayer,
For the removal of that curse hereditary,
Stamped on his brow when earth was young !
But ah ! in vain ! Not yet—O God—not yet
Is the deep vengeance of thine awful ire
Administered to the full !


The world is whirling on its axis ever !
And as it changes not, save in its seasons—
The Spring-like energy, the Summer's heat,
The Autumn's generous fruitfulness,
The Winter's stern relapse to death—
So man unchanging lives and dies, save in his change
From love to hate, from hate to love—
From vice to virtue, and from joy to sorrow !

The world is whirling, moving, turning, ever !—
Whirling amid the planets, moving in royal state
Around its fiery center,—and Life and Death,
Disease, Despair, Madness, Self-Murder, every horror
That shakes the soul, as hurricanes shake the forests,
Is whirling with it—whirling through all the nations !

Turn round, strange World !—whirl on, O awful Planet !
Bring us the day—alas ! why does it linger ?—
When Love shall love not vainly—when the shroud
Which wraps us round shall change to orange-blossoms !
Bring us the time, fleet-turning, restless Planet,
When Love shall cease to change, but, as in Eden,
Shall weave a web of Beauty through the quiet
Of all the moving years—and Crime and Death
Shall flit, as flits the weary hour that's passing
Never to come again !

XXX.

The Gourd.

 CITY READER,—Did you ever visit the country on a hot Summer day, and dip the cool, cool water from a greenish, mossy bucket, with a gourd?

Say nothing to me about your made-up city drinks at city saloons, or even of boreal soda, from the city fountains. If you have never raised an old, half-rotted bucket, either by windlass or “derrick-pole,” out of a slippy-sloppy, emerald-walled well, and thrust a gourd into it for a drink, you have never known the highest enjoyment of a thirsty voluptuary.

In the course of my “brief but checkered life,” I have tried all kinds of drinks, and, like Sir Charles Coldstream, have found them generally to pall upon the senses. After drinking the most elaborate beverages that the genius of man can arrange,—and out of every variety of goblet, cup, and beaker,—I have at last sought that with which I first began life; and have found the simplest form of drinking-vessel, and the least adulterated beverage, the best.

A careless, unthinking man—a man who is always in a hurry—a man of little esthetic principle, might ask,

“What concerns the vessel which you use in drinking, if your thirst be satisfied?” But it seems to me—may be it is a mere whim—that the difference is a quite important one.

Let us glance, cursorily, at a few drinking-vessels.

Away from home, traveling footsore and thirsty in a wilderness, or hunting in the great forests for game, the drinking-cup must be of the simplest kind. On such occasions I have usually taken a large leaf from a bush—pawpaw, for example—twisted it into a cup, and drank from its dainty convolution—a gracious potation! It takes some time to satisfy the thirst this way, as the cup is necessarily imperfect; but still my memory of pawpaw drinking-vessels is very, very comforting.

Then, sometimes I have used the hollow of my hand at a forest brook—an unsatisfactory method. At other times I have lain down flat upon the bosom of the earth, and imbibed the water, horse-fashion, with my lips. I generally got all the water I desired by this plan; for a cool-flowing brook furnishes the fluid as rapidly as one can take it in. But I am always afraid of swallowing something besides water when I drink in this manner. The newspaper legends of men who have swallowed small snakes, and tadpoles, and centipedes, which have afterward become horrible monsters in their stomachs, doing them to death, affright my imagination; and a horizontal quenching of the thirst is sought with reluctance.

These are modes of drinking, however, which belong to rude conditions of life—among hunters and lost travelers—and are not affected by the civilized drinker.

But at all times and in all seasons I can recommend the gourd above every thing as a drinking-utensil. Yes, even at parties in the gay city,—for I attended a social gathering, at one time, where gourds were used, and though the uniqueness of the cup caused some comment, none were offended. These primitive vessels, on the occasion mentioned, were chased and mounted with silver.

I used to like those iron tankards suspended by a strong chain from the pumps in Western villages,—we have them at Tusculum,—and which fall with a tintinnabulary music against the side of the pump when you release them after quenching your thirst. While lifting this vessel to your lips, you may see the shining metal through the transparent fluid, and it has a cooling, oozy, wet sort of effect upon the system of the drinker.

Tin-cups I never did like, nor pewter mugs. If asked to give a reason, I hardly think I could give much more than a feminine one: I do n't like them, because—I do n't like them! There is a repulsive opacity about them—they are prosily dull and dingily obscure—they will not reflect the crystallineness of pure water, nor warn you of any stray thousand-leg-bug which may be lurking within—they conceal the quality of the fluid you are drinking: it may be as muddy as the Missouri or as diaphanous as a mountain lake, without your knowledge; and an essential attribute in a drinking-cup is, honesty and openness, a frank revelation of its liquid contents.

The waters of our own romantic Ohio I always drink from a tumbler, or glass vessel. I am fond of holding it up to the light, and viewing it in its different moods,—



sometimes yellow, like gold; sometimes white, like glistening silver; and sometimes with a sufficient shade of green to show that it has been loitering amid the grass and leaves of a bucolic locality.

“ Full various, that the mind of desultory man,
Studios of change, and pleased with novelty,
May be indulged.”

The gold and silver tinges remind me of “*La Belle Rivière's*” practical side,—turning wheels for mills, carrying from port to port the wealth of great towns and cities, floating huge crafts in commercial enterprises. The emerald shade carries my imagination into pleasant meadows and shady woodlands, to the generous parks and quiet homesteads of the wealthy rustic. And thus the glass vessel becomes a mirror of many phases of life.

The gourd, however, is my chosen drinking-cup. I like it on account of its dear, old-fashioned simplicity. I like it, may be, most of all, because it is a memento of the past. Long, long years ago, when I was an infant, my venerable grandfather and grandmother drank from the gourd, beside an old well, on the banks of the beautiful Buckskin, when that spot was a wilderness. The memory of the gourd which touched my infant lips has hallowed that cup, to my mind.

I like it, too, because I used to drink from a gourd, as a spruce lad, when I visited my little country cousin—dear lassie, where and what is she now? We both drank from the same gourd—such are the homely ways of kinship in youth.

But I like the gourd for itself—the most permanent liking, after all. I think that the patriarchs and prophets of old must have drank from gourds. When Rebekah went to the well, and met there the servant of the man who became her “fate,” he was, we may suppose, soothing his weary spirit by drinking from a gourd. Why not? The Scripture story tells us that he asked Rebekah to permit him to drink from her pitcher. This was a ruse to make her acquaintance. He had already quenched his thirst—no doubt—at the well; but the beautiful daughter of Bethuel was glad to overlook this, and to permit him to drink from the vessel which she carried. Bright girls, tripping along with pitchers to old wells, and gourds, are powerful incentives to love.

The literal critic will perhaps tell me that there were no gourds at the wells in those days. Yet Scripture history speaks commendably of the gourd. To Jonah it was made the type of all that is refreshing to the spirit—a shadow to cool him in the Summer heats.

And who shall assert that the Jews, a people full of poetical invention, did not first of all place beside their public wells this thirst-delivering implement, to cool the parched throat of the passing pilgrim?

In ancient Egypt the *shadoof*, that simple lever of timber moving on a pivot, loaded at one end with stones or a lump of clay, and with a bucket at the other, was as common as it is now in the Western States of America; and I like to imagine the joy of the traveler, or hunter, or thirsty laborer, as he drew the dripping bucket, and dashed the gourd into it—the gourd which always hung

near by, hospitably inviting the passenger to come, and taste, and be renewed.

I like to imagine the dark-haired, wine-eyed Rebekahs of that far, far age, dressed in their scant but graceful drapery, going to the wells with earthen pitchers, and dallying with the tempting gourd ere they returned homeward with the ice-cold liquid—perhaps to be reproved for their happy loitering.

The very word *gourd* calls up to the mind the most romantic images. When I pick up a gourd, fill it with God's own beverage, and peer into its misty, mystic depths, shadows of the past, visions of ages gone, dreams of antique ruins of springs and old wells—like the scenes in the astrologer's magic mirror—flit across the water I am about to drink. And so I dream, and dream, till thirst warns me to empty the vessel, and the sweet reality of the Present is before me.


Other vessels do not act thus upon my mind; and so I have catalogued the gourd at the head of the poet's drinking utensils for its soothing memories.



XXXI.

Love-Songs.

I.

A large, ornate initial letter 'M' in a blackletter style, decorated with intricate floral and vine patterns. The letter is positioned at the start of the first line of the poem.

MEET me, love, when Night is flowing in the
trembling sea above ;
Meet me, love, when Cynthia, glowing, animates
the scenes we love ;
And the rosy star of evening, seeming like a sunny isle
In that sea of glory beaming, wakes glad Nature to a smile.

Meet me, love, when dews are falling on the fainting,
thirsty flower,
When the wip-po-wil is calling to his sad mate in the
bower !
Smiling Loves shall linger round us, earth transforming
to the skies—
Sorrow strive in vain to wound us in the leafy Paradise.

O, what Joy, on seraph pinions, bears the soul to worlds
above,
When our hearts, responsive swelling, beat to harmonies
of love !
Could we drink such bliss forever in the leafy woodland
grot,
Angel bands might gladly leave their happy spheres to
wed our lot !



II.

'T IS night, and in the quiet sky
There glows a single star,
On which I gaze, with tearful eye,
As from the blue afar,

It sends a melancholy light—
A memory of thee—
Of joys that long have ta'en their flight,
And left a sting with me.

As thus it burns, that genial star,
In every ray I trace
A lineament of fadeless love
On calm Creation's face.
O, canst thou view it, this soft hour
Of silent memory,
Nor breathe one fleeting sigh for him
Who thinks of nought but thee?

Does not yon far and failing star,
This holiest of eyes,
Remind thee of the plighted vow
Beneath the locust leaves?
O, canst thou view its placid beam,
And feel no secret pain,
No tender longing in thy breast
For those sweet hours again?

Ah! no; as that pellucid light
Is hidden from my eyes
By some bleak cloud, that throws its gloom
Across the shining skies,

Thy love is shrouded from my soul,
And fled its light divine,
While wastes in darkness, all alone,
This withered heart of mine.

III.

How sweetly glows the red, red rose
Upon the mountain's peak !
But O, more sweet its beauty glows
Upon thy cheek.

How brightly shine the stars of night
Upon the Summer sky !
But brighter beams the light of love
From thy clear eye.

The singing-birds that on the sprays
Of amorous Spring rejoice,
Do not so thrill the human breast
As thy sweet voice !

Those eyes, those eyes of melting blue !
They steal the soul away,
And leave to lovers but a mass
Of trembling clay.

Those lips, that seem the rosy gates
Of pearly Paradise,
To kiss were easiest way to steal
Into the skies.

O, ruddy stars, forsake your realms !
Rose, leave the mountain side !
Birds, cease your songs upon the sprays !
Ye are outvied !

IV.

O, MOLLY dear, when I, in silent clay,
Shall sleep the sleep that never knows awaking,
Wilt thou, the harsh and icy world forsaking,
Come to my tomb, and weep those eyes away ?
Or scatter flowers, or plant some fragrant tree
Above thy lover's breast ? Or wilt forget
That he, whose heart was ever turned to thee,
Is sleeping placidly, from life set free,
Nor breathe the faintest murmur of regret ?
Ah ! how uncertain those glad eyes appear !
If I should 'scape the world, my wandering fair,
Those lips a smile for happier souls would wear,
And my lone turf would never feel a tear
In all its weedy solitude, from year to year !

V.

LADY, thou 'rt very beautiful : thine eyes
Are Cupid's piercing daggers, and thy voice
Maketh my bosom, as a wave, rejoice :
O, it doth heave, in secret love, with sighs !
I scan thy features, and my spirits fly
In frenzied bliss unto the cloudless sky.

Thy cheeks might tempt the butterfly depart
The nectar'd rose-bud, which at morn it sips
In soft luxuriance ; and thy ruby lips
Could, with one curl, subdue the miser's heart.
O, fairest angel,—thou to whom the rose
Bows its inferior head, and from the wind,
Near thy rich breath, withholds its odors kind,
Hast no defect? Ay—one: Thou hast no Nose!

VI.

MIRA, last night I dreamed thou wert a flower,
A vernant mead perfuming—I a dew,
Dropped from a sparkling star, amid a shower
Of brother pearls that near Elysium grew,
Fell gently on thy cheek—there I inspired
The deep and joyful fragrance of thy form,

Till Phœbus strutted up the East, and fired
The earth with all his splendor deep and warm,
And rudely kissed thy cheek of vermeil bloom,
Then, Phœnix-like, I faded in perfume!



XXXII.

The Wind.

I.



HE Wind is a Reveler.

He frequently becomes weary of his life amid
the solitary mountain pines,
And comes down into the valleys among the haunts of
men, with a magnificent flourish of trumpets.
Inspired by the music that accompanies him on his march,
He begins to caper and dance about with every thing in
his path.
He seizes the twigs and leaves upon the road, and whirls
away madly with them in a fantastic waltz,
And in the spiral cloud of dust he may be seen capering
with his unique companions.

Tiring of these, he plunges into the woods, and, clasping
the huge elms and oaks about the waist,
They sway gracefully with him upon their green forest
carpets.

Then he catches the little maiden saplings by the hands,
And right merrily they swing off through the far green
aisles of the wildwood,
Light and lithe as the gay partner they have selected.

See! the wild-flowers raise their heads as he passes on
his musical, jocund way!
The johnny-jump-up jumps up, and the sweet-william
exhales a sweeter odor;
The blue eyes of the violet glisten in sweeter hues;
The honey-suckle attempts to unclasp its arms from the
tall hickory to which it has clung for years;
The lily looks up with almost a blush;
Even the modest, quiet daisy lifts its pious head—a sym-
bol of lovely amiability;
And all ask the light-hearted, daring Wind to join them
in a dance in the forest.

He consents, and away they all go together:
The birds in the murmuring tree-tops whistle the music,
The brooks join in with their silver cymbals, and the
solitude is alive with happiness.
The very sunshine has caught the general hilarity.
Over the bright green grass, and in and out of the
shadows,
It sports in a thousand grotesque shapes, snapping its
golden fingers,
And seeming to be almost delirious with fun.

And thus the Wind, as a Reveler,
Pursues its joyous way.

11.

The Wind is a Desolator.

Changeful as he is in his moods, he soon grows weary
Coquetting with the beautiful forms that are ever in his
presence.

Arising, like some infatuated madman, from his repose
after a revel,
The cloud upon his brow, the shaking thunder in his
voice, the lightning in his eye,
He marches, like a demon, over mountain and plain.
The trembling forest lifts up its hand imploringly as he
thunders down upon it.
He heeds not the suppliant; but, seizing it by the hair,
he tears it from the earth, and hurls it to the skies.

He seeks the secluded hamlet, the country seat, the big
city,
And laughs in demoniac triumph as he hurries away from
their ruins.
Out upon the sea he goes, tossing the surges in frantic
splendor,
And shaking the grand old Ocean till he frets and heaves
his huge chest gigantically.

The sailors see this monster Wind coming from afar, and
reef the sails, and make every thing snug and taut
for him;

For they know that he hates the sight of white canvas
and a rickety ship.
He speeds toward the vessel ; but, seeing every thing in
its place, turns reveler for a time,
And dances gallantly with the trim craft in its ocean home.
Then away again, howlingly—
As if repentant of his short respite from destruction,
away he speeds landward.
The poor owner of the solitary hut in the mountans,
returning from labor,
Beholds his home shattered to earth before his eyes, and
his family buried beneath the ruins,—
All lost in a single night, home, kindred and earthly
happiness,—
And the reckless Desolator goes laughing and shouting
upon his way.

Thus, over river, and lake, and ocean,
Over mountain, hill, and valley, he marches relentlessly,
And tears and death, desolation and gloom, are in his
pathway.

III.

The Wind is a Comforter.

Having thrown himself wearily upon the soft bosom of
some voluptuous plain when his terrible hour of
wrath has passed away,
He awakes, after a sweet sleep, and, breathing the fra-
grance that encompasses him every-where,

He is happy, and a quiet sympathy fills his nature,—
He steps from his couch, and goes out into the beautiful
world, “stealing and giving odor.”

Yon tender daisy in the solitary plain, under a stunted
shrub,
Is drooping for companionship and for the cooling shadow
of the wildwood.
The Wind sees it, and approaching, he kindly lifts up its
weary head, whispers to it soothingly, kisses its
cheeks,
And goes away, leaving a blush of joy upon its face.

An old pilgrim, with his bundle and stick, oppressed by
the heat of the day, has seated himself upon the
grass beneath yon tree.
See how he mops his sweaty forehead with his hand-
kerchief,
And swells out his shining cheeks with blowing!
The comforting Wind sees him, and runs up pleasantly
to the parched traveler:
He fans back the hair from his brow, breathes in cooling
puffs upon his lips,
And thrills him through and through with delicious peace.

The sick man, lying with a fever in his chamber, gasps
suffocatingly for air.
His attendants assuage the fever but temporarily with
their fans.

Presently along comes that blessed Comforter, the Wind.
He bears in his hands the balm of a thousand flowers,
And leaping lightly into the sick man's room, he flings
the odors every-where.

He flies to the invalid's bed, plays flutteringly with his
hair, smooths down his cheek,
Pours upon his heated lips a draught of some cool essence
caught from the mountain brook,
And makes the apartment, before so oppressive, as breezy
as the mountain grove.

And thus the sympathetic Wind travels forth on his errand
of mercy.

He is no respecter of persons or localities.
He seeks the lowest huts among the mines and the fish-
eries by the sea-shore,
As well as the gaudy palaces of the vain and proud,
Whispering to each and all his delightful mission of
cheerfulness and love.



XXXIII.

October Reveries.



JACK FROST has already become so delicate with his cold fingers as to paint his curious images on the window-panes, and each night he lays rude devices over the fields, and hangs his fleecy mantle on fence and roof. The leaves on the trees have been bitten by him, and those that are not falling upon the ground, are trembling into all the hues of the iris, or are dying changefully, like the fabled dolphin. The death of Nature! What a sublime spectacle it is to him who loves Nature—what a solemn object of contemplation! And yet it does not seem so much like death, neither, to look at it rightly. When an animal dies, he dissolves, through corruptibility, into original elements. He becomes part and parcel of the irresponsible, inactive universe. When a vegetable really dies, it not only puts aside the rich robes with which it has been clothed, but gradually decays,

trunk, root, and branch, and settles back to light dust. But in Autumn, when you see the green woods, the shrubs, and bushes losing their garniture, and becoming black skeletons, you must not think they are dying. They are only folding themselves for the Winter—retiring, like the cold-blooded reptiles, into torpidity. In Spring they will burst again into life and beauty, rejoicing at their escape from the fatal blows of the North-king.

The poets, however, like to speak of the annual change which takes place in Nature as a death. It affords fine scope for the imagination. If they were not permitted to look upon all the works of the Almighty with the eye of fancy, and give body and shape to unsubstantial visions, they would have no occupation. I do not know but that I have myself some of that lightness of head and heaviness of heart which is deemed the especial characteristic of the poet—that Harold Skimpole lassitude of disposition which loves luxury and hates work. So, while the long lines of migratory birds are clattering southward, overhead, this frosty, bracing weather, I like to creep into my snug library, beside a beech-wood fire, defy the cold, smoke my rustic pipe in the pleasant warmth, and fall a-dreaming.

Ah me! what feelings come unbidden in dreams—day-dreams in particular! The mind goes back into its chamber, then, erects its canvas there, and sketches the pictures of the Past—those are full of regrets; of the Present—these are of a mingled dye; of the Future—those glow with all the colors of the rainbow! Is it not strange that Fancy can take no tinge from Experience?



Though the poet's past has been a continuous storm, with scarcely a gleam of sunshine, when he begins to picture the Future, it glows in all the radiant colors of love. Like the unfortunate and contented Micawber, he is always looking, when he dreams, for "something to turn up." But when he awakes, and gathers his wits about him, he is the saddest-hearted fellow in the world. But, then, perhaps, the inspiration that comes over him at times, and kindles his fancies into verse, repays him for his sadness.

Have you not read of Shakspeare's "eye in a fine frenzy rolling?" The immortal bard no doubt, in that passage, indicates his own experience. Have you not read of Robert Burns walking the beach of his favorite stream, and clapping his hands with joy whenever a favorite thought became embodied in words? These moments were the purple curtains that dropped between him and the world, hiding from his eyes the creditors and duns that harried him to death. I have an idea that all poets have such moments. Chatterton, "the marvelous boy," whose brief life was a wail of agony, and who finally perished a suicide, had thousands of such hours flashing into the blackness of his existence, only to leave him more desolate when the brightness was gone.

You need not tell me that any one can be a poet, and remain ignorant of the fact. Those weird and charmed hours that visit the poet, and surround him with an atmosphere of rapture, remind him that he is not as other men. They point out to him his course of life. They are prophetic periods which tell him that he shall not

succeed in life, unless he thrusts the enchantress from him, sternly and relentlessly.

Now, you may say that you have heard of poets who got along very well in the world—died rich—and left a good little fortune for their loving relations to quarrel over. Name them. There 's Rogers, eh? And Fitz Greene Halleck. Granted: I will allow you there are exceptions, even to this rule. But Fitz seldom troubled the Muses. He perceived that business and poetry are incompatible, and drove the "Nine" from his doors. As for Rogers, read him carefully, and you will find that his verses indicate very hard work rather than inspiration. Some one writing to a friend of Foster, the essayist, asked how that author was getting along. "In the old way," was the answer; "he is writing a line a day." Such was the manner of Rogers. He could not have been an inspired poet. Inspiration is accompanied by spontaneity, and not by severe labor. The bard may polish the crude gem after he has found it, giving it more beauty to the educated eye; but the gem, after all, is revealed only by some sudden gleam of divine light.

A frosty morning—in October!

I look at my window, and see the wonderful work which Jack Frost has penciled thereon gradually disappearing as the sun rises toward the meridian. The long-limbed giants, Thundermug and Blunderbore, who straddle across huge rivers and over the tree-tops with burdens of sheep and oxen slung in their girdles, are fading ghostlike into the thin atmosphere, with the forests, the ruins, and

rivers ; and the bridges which span the latter are giving place to the beautiful Bridge, away in the distance, spanning the Ohio, faintly outlined through my window. I often see that Bridge from my attic-room, hanging like a structure of gossamer against the blue sunset sky, separated from me by woods and valleys and the humble roofs of the village of Tusculum, where Neibelungen does her "shopping;" and the sight of it, and the few thoughts which I have written on "poets and wealth," awaken memories that I would not willingly repress.

A friend of mine about twenty-five years ago, wrote a short poem for the press which he called "The Vision." The vision was not one which a poet usually sees—an air-castle in the clouds—but a happy augury of "what was to be." Yon bridge which spans the Ohio River, making Siamese Twins of two great States, was depicted in that vision. Many things were prophesied of a similarly wonderful character: some of these have come to pass, others still remain for the future to unfold.

As I stood on the Bridge, the other day, and looked around me, I thought of my friend's poem. On every side, standing as sentinels to protect the Queen City from the blasts of Winter and the miasms of the dog-days, were the hills. When my friend wrote his poem, those hills were covered with groves and thick woods, where the boys went nutting, and the lads and lasses from the schools picnicked in the May-days. Now towns, and villages, and elegant suburban villas adorn their sides and crown their summits. The thick woods have vanished, like a thick smoke; the thunder of machinery is heard

where the boys went nutting; pleasant lawns, handsome parterres, artificial groves, now dot a landscape which, not many years ago, was the haunt of wild birds and the squirrel. Even the quiet hills and brooks in the vicinity of Tusculum are changed. Strong bridges span the once dashing, romantic streams, and the iron steed has driven away the birds and the poetry! But, alas! change is not alone here!



My poet friend has passed away. He has not lived to see the fulfillment of his poetic dream. His life was a

fortunate one ; but his death was terrible and unexpected. He was blown from the steamer "Redstone," some few years ago, while on the gangway plank, leaving the boat just as that terrible accident occurred. No trace of him has since been discovered.

While standing on the Bridge, looking upon the wild whirl of waters beneath, the steamboats puffing and whizzing upon the landing, and all the signs of commercial prosperity on every hand, the face and form of my dead friend came up before me, as they come before me now.

He, though a poet, was not a dreamer. His inspiration was much like that of the ancient seers, whose eyes looked far into the future, and saw the coming greatness of man. The "Bridges" which he built in his mind were not made of the transitory frost, but were substantial as that which now spans the Ohio, a thoroughfare for mightiest commerce.

He was not, nor could he be, a *great* poet ; because his life was one of activity in other and more practical pursuits. He "built the lofty rhyme," at intervals ; but he also assisted to build, with a skilled hand, structures of a more solid character in town and country. Poetry never puts bread and butter into a young man's mouth,—and he knew it. He was not, like Chatterton and David Gray, so foolish as to think that the end of all life is poesy ; and to scorn and curse the world because it would not rescue him from obscurity and poverty. With firm hand and sound brain, he worked his way among his fellow-men, and left behind him—if not a name—a goodly quantity of bankable funds.

It is a fact that Fortune never comes in double guise to a man. If she brings him fame as an author, she leaves him in poverty; if she brings him wealth, she takes away his capacity for acquiring literary reputation.

The man who would be wealthy must not be a dreamer in any sense of the word. "The world is all before him where to choose;" and if he does not choose aright, Want will ever haunt him, with its attendant spirits, sickness of heart, darkness, and despair.

Look down through the past, and what shall you see? From "the blind old bard of Scio's rocky isle" to the blind old bard of England—all those who have won literary renown, have lived in want, and sometimes famine. I need not mention instances. The reader of history is acquainted with them all. There may be exceptions to the cases of poverty in literary men; but exceptions form no rule. The instances of poverty and neglect are so numerous that a huge and hideous monument reaching to the clouds might be built of them.

My poet friend, who prophesied, in his admirable poem, the erection of this great Bridge, and the thick population of all these hills that surround it, did not belong to the class of literary starvelings. And why? Because he had read the history of ages gone by. The world, from time almost immemorial, came before him, in judgment; and he deeply, keenly judged. He saw that genius—while it breathed the breath of life—was treated with contempt. And a life of contumely and shame was not to him desirable. He buried the harp he had strung in youth as he grew older; and made use of the bone

and sinew which God gave him, that he might live happily. For what is posthumous fame to him who has starved in a debtor's prison?

Supposing, as the imaginative Perkins believed, that the spirits of the dead are ever hovering round us: Can it give the hovering spirit any satisfaction to know that mankind is embalming its every earthly act in immortal history? Must not that spirit, disrobed of its mortal envies, jealousies, hopes, fears, aspirations for praise, look down with spiritual contempt upon the inconsistent, short-sighted beings who spurned it while in the flesh, and who now worship it in the spirit?

My friend felt this. He knew that living for his dearest friends, for his kindred, for his family, for himself, was a nobler employment than striving to please a race of beings who turn their backs on genius when it needs their encouragement the most, and lay their honors upon an empty shrine that can not feel the glory of the gift.

Thus he was a poet—a seer—a prophet, such as a poet should be—who kept his inspiration to himself—buried it in the inmost recesses of his soul, and lived a happy man.

If all poets were like him, we should miss much that is musical; but the world would be a more pleasant place for the human family. If all practical men were like him, there would be less of misery and crime; for I feel convinced that the man, naturally poetical, who tames down the inspiration within him, and devotes his energies to practical ends, must needs sow some seeds of reform in the hearts of men that will ultimately bring forth goodly fruit.

That Bridge, then, bringing to memory as it does, my old-time friend and his poetical auguries which had so much of the practical in them—speaking, as it does, of the indomitable faith and energy of man—whispers also of the strife, the “fever and the fret,” that burns in the human heart. I would fain turn from the theme to my humble attic-room, its library of few but choice authors, my pipe, and my dreams.

But even on the shadowy side there is food for reflection. My friend Asmodeus remarked to me, as we crossed the Bridge on its opening day, “What a splendid place for committing suicide! One leap, and all were over!” Could Asmodeus have seen into the future? But a few weeks passed, and lo! an unfortunate wretch, tired of life, and mad with delirium, leaped from the Bridge in search of a watery grave—but found it not. He was saved by some mistakenly humane individuals, who rowed from the shore in skiffs.

There is somewhat of a melancholy tinge in the atmosphere about the Bridge, which seems not to exist elsewhere. Especially is the melancholy character of the circumambient air to be felt near the Bridge’s center. One looks down—far down—to the turbid water, and is filled with an indescribable longing to mount the guard-way of the Bridge, and plunge into the muddy wave. There would be fame in the act, too; for while the Bridge lasts, the names of its suicides will be a portion of its history.

You look from the Bridge toward the banks on either side. The busy sounds of life on the shore can not reach

you. The moving multitudes appear as dim specks—with no higher aims in view than so many emmets. Who can believe that there is power to conquer the wide world, and master the secrets of the universe, in that crowd of little animals? Ambition, wealth, knowledge, life itself—all seem “trifles light as air,” mere dreams—and the pulsing heart of humanity beats dim and distant.

Vehicles of all kinds, and pedestrians, are crossing the Bridge; but they are mere drops oozing out from the mightier thoroughfare and back again, leaving no trace behind them. The lightest wire of the Bridge does not tremble as they move. You can scarcely hear the voice of this moving throng—it is so lost in the wilderness of air above and around—the wide void which absorbs, thirstily, the loudest sound, and drinks it to a whisper.

You look up toward the sky, and the sky looks back upon you with a calm, cold, unsympathetic stare. There is no encouragement to “be joyous,” even to a man in his pleasant moods. What, then, must the heavens seem to one who has torn himself away from that busy world with anguish and the desire for death in his heart?

It is curious, too, that men, while in a melancholy or distracted state of mind, will seek a place like this to calm their distraction, or nurse their melancholy. They come here to wrestle with their thoughts, and to brood till their madness grows deeper, and the sullen river looks like a bosom friend, whom to embrace were happiness.

Shall we not believe that yon dark-browed man, leaning over the parapet, and looking meditatively at the water, is debating some terrible tragedy—is balancing in his

thought the probabilities of happiness and misery beyond "the tide." Balancing—ah! to what end?

It is not difficult to read character, physiognomically, on the Bridge. Whatever passion, whatever virtue, whatever of feebleness or power there is in a man, bursts forth into his face as distinctly as the terrible lines that startled Belshazzar. He forgets himself—the shackles of custom and hypocrisy fall from his soul, when he comes into the unusual presence of this mighty Space. He looks about him as one embarrassed with a new sensation, and then yields himself to the influence of the place. Or, if he be a darker villain than common, he visits this spot with his confederates, to plan some foray or deed of blood.

I see, in my mind's eye, three men crossing the Bridge together. They are whispering to each other with white, compressed lips. They pause in the least frequented place, by one of the abutments, and look about fearfully. Shall we steal up, as one "shod in felt," or as an invisible sprite, and listen to their conversation?

Their faces are brutal; though young, crime has had its influence upon every feature; and here, away from the seething sounds of the city; here, under the solemn canopy of the skies, with the universal Eye looking into their very faces, they are conspiring to rob and murder. They leave the Bridge, with that suspicious look that ever lurks in the faces of the guilty; they move northward; and ere another sun has risen, dark rumors of an awful crime thrill every heart in the city.

What a book might be written upon this Bridge in a few years—what tales of wonder and horror, that would

startle the reader if woven into verse, or skillfully depicted in prose !

The Bridge Company ought to keep a log of all the incidents, accidents, crimes that transpire upon the Bridge, and publish it yearly—not the trifling ones, but those of real interest and importance. That publication would form a volume, in time, more popular than any mere national history that has ever been written, at least to the multitudes who cross the Bridge from day to day on business or for pleasure. The Annals of the Bridge might be a theme for our posterity to weep or laugh over, and for the world to admire.

But where am I wandering? I commenced with frost, and ended with poets and bridges. Yet are not these, after all, mere frostwork?—more elaborate, haply, than that which the North-king erects upon leaf and crystal—

But frostwork—frostwork—all !



XXXIV.

Russet Cottage.



QUIET cottage in a quiet vale,
Shut out from tumult 'mid the waving trees,—
Here come the birds, and butterflies, and bees,
Through all the days of Summer, without fail.
And music, fairy music, on the gale
Is ever stealing in such gentle train,
That mortal spirit melteth at the strain.
With joy a glassy streamlet tells its tale
Unto the listening zephyr that goes by,—
And, climbing lazily to the smiling sky,
The smoke curls from the chimney, calm and pale.
O, honest rustic! in this quiet spot
Methinks the glory of Contentment dwells,
Joy breathes a beauty through these fragrant dells,
And Love is keeper of our humble cot!



XXXV.

New Boots.



ONE of the frostiest of frosty October mornings, my boy Ned burst into my room. The frost had affected him somewhat. His mother had thrust him into a thick coat, and put on his shoes, to keep Jack Frost from biting his toes.

"Pa," said he, "I want a pair of boots."

I peered over the table at his shoes, and saw they were in a dilapidated condition. They "grinned horribly a ghastly smile" at the toes, suggestive of many a successful contest with old oyster-cans, stuffed hats, stray bits of clod, and other nuisances.

"New boots are expensive, my boy," I responded, "won't a good, stout pair of shoes do?"

"No, sir. Winter is coming; and the snow always gets up my legs when I ride down hill on my sled with shoes."

What father with a heart in his bosom could resist such an appeal?

"Ned," said I, with a reckless disregard of expense, "you shall have the boots on Saturday night."

The sunshine that illuminated my heir's features was worth a thousand pairs of boots. Sunshine? It was sunshine, moonshine, starshine, and aurora-borealis-shine, all combined.

Each morning the lad awoke from slumber, and counted the days before Saturday; and I took an interest in the approaching occasion myself: for did I not remember the glory of my own first new boots?

Yes: Ned had new boots on the brain—there is no doubt of it. He gazed with anxious curiosity on the feet of every man and boy, and became a profound connoisseur in shoe and boot leather. He gauged the enjoyment of all men (and boys) by the age of their feet-coverings and the extent of their leather leggings. He specially envied a butcher lad, who wore a pair of monster boots, the legs of which reached to his body, and terminated in the splendor of red leather and a bronzed American flag.

Saturday night—the laboring man's hour of rest—came at last. Saturday night—the laboring man's hour of reward for toil—arrived, with an atmosphere all balm, and an unclouded setting sun. The household idols—Penates and Lares—glowed smilingly at our family hearth that evening. And there, too, was the grinning face of Ned, looking down with boyish disgust on his faded old shoes. Poor old shoes! Little gratefulness was there in the breast of my boy for the good service they had done him. He had somehow managed in his out-door exercises to get them covered with an almost miraculous amount of mud, so that they looked excessively unprepossessing. He seemed to insist on having some sufficient

reason for a divorce from them, the desire for boots having taken full possession of his mind.

And so away to Tusculum went Ned and I—his ambition for boots culminating in a nervous trembling when we stood in front of a flaming show-window, glittering in the full pomp and parade of every description and size of new boots.

Boots,—from the pretty miniature pair that tickles the fancy of the shaver just budding into trowsers to the ponderous affairs worn by the “scarred soldier, rough and hard of heart”—

Boots,—from those fit for the delicate ancles of the miss of “sweet sixteen” to the rugged kips of the butcher who wades in slaughter to wealth.

Boots were every-where,—hanging round the walls of the shoe-store; standing on the counters; ranged in long rows in glass cases, as if on dress parade; put up in big boxes, with the soles staring us out of countenance.

Nothing but a huge bewilderment of boots greeted us on all sides; the modest shoes had retired from sight.

“There, Ned,” said I, as we entered this ocean of leather, smelling strangely new; “get your boots, and let them be lasting ones.”

Ned hesitated where to begin. He had no idea, before, that there were so many boots in the world. He had supposed that a cordwainer’s shop which contained one or two pairs of boots—especially boy’s boots—was a fine scene of beauty, and that perfection could no further go.

But here—surrounded on every hand with boots enough apparently to supply the whole world for many years to

come—his imagination was appalled, and he could only open his mouth and eyes, and gaze.

After rambling about awhile, and selecting boots with an indifferent appreciation of their size, he at length became accustomed to the cow-and-calf-skin splendor, and began to look for his boots more systematically.

At length he was satisfied. A pair of "stogies," immensely thick-soled and gloriously red-topped, illustrated with a big American flag bronzed and starred in a way that would amaze Bird-o'-Freedom Sawin, was selected. The old shoes were mercilessly pitched into the street, and my boy strutted forth from the shoe-store, looking about upon the boots of the passers-by with an air of proud superiority.

O, superabundant enjoyment of boyhood! Not lofty to the man of threescore and ten seems the fulfillment of a boy's aspirations; but to the boy it is delicious.

The man of full-grown years aspires to wealth—big houses—town lots—country residences—city palaces—the poet's fame—a seat in the Senate or the Presidential chair; but youth pants fervently for a tin-whistle, a drum, a pack of fire-crackers, or a new pair of boots.

When he obtains these, what then? Is his satisfaction complete?

My boy's highest idea of human greatness was apparently attained. But only apparently.

For a few days, in the mornings, his first thought was of his boots; and he would rise and survey them in every possible attitude, as Napoleon may have surveyed his grand armies. Frequently he would pull them on and

off during the day to admire them, and to enjoy the thrilling rapture of their attrition. Once I found him up a back alley, sitting in the dirt. His boots were off, standing beside him, and he was looking upon them with quiet complacency.

But this could not last. As the boot novelty wore off, a new idea of manliness floated into his brain.

He must have a boot-jack.

"Pa," said he, one morning, after a severe struggle with his boots, "Pa, how am I to get my boots off easily without a boot-jack?"

I was in my "study" in the garret, reading "Sartor Resartus," deeply interested in the sesquipedals of that most wordy yet deeply philosophical work, when my son accosted me. To be pulled down from such sublime contemplations as one reaches in the perusal of Carlyle, to the common theme of a boot-jack, is not calculated to smooth the temper; and I suspect that I addressed my boy harshly.

"Sir," said I, "have I not frequently told you to keep out of my library? Away with you!"

Ned turned disconsolately and whimperingly toward the door, and plunged his fist into his eye, in the incipient stages of a white squall. At these signs I relented.

"Come here, Ned."

My boy worked his fist into his pocket, and confronted me.

"You know, sir," said I, "that I can not unbend my mind from study to engage in the occupations of an artisan." (I always address my son in simple language;

but on this occasion Sartor Resartus had possession of me.) "Go to your granddad, and request him to manufacture the instrument you desire. His mechanical abilities are sufficient for that task."

"But grandpa is so old and weak—how can he make a boot-jack?"

"Age hath its uses, my son. And I know of no better use to put it to than the making of boot-jacks. Go do as I bid you."

My son hesitated. But an imperious wave of my hand doorward, and a stern bending of my brows, warned him that our conference could not be prolonged, and he reluctantly departed.

Said I not rightly, that age hath its uses? Although granddad Dominic trembled on the verge of the grave, and appeared in the sunshine only as worms and centipedes do—hiding in the warmth of his cranny, in our cabin, when Boreas and the Nimbi were abroad—yet he could do such little work as satisfied the capacity of childhood. Thus not in vain had I sent my son to him.

Presently I heard his voice and Ned's in sharp and shrill discussion. The word "boot-jack" feverishly fell upon my ears, punctuating the sounding sentences of Sartor, and depriving that high-strung discourse of much of its eloquence.

Then a sound of hammer and nails,—and the rasping melody of a handsaw. And I knew that the boot-jack was in course of construction.

In the lapse of time Ned appeared in my room with that useful implement in his hand.

"There!" said he, holding it up, with a look of triumphant admiration, "there it is; and a first-rate one it is, too."

"Certainly it is, Ned. Your grandfather is a man of genius, old as he is. I am but a poor manufacturer of boot-jacks, my boy. When you have any thing to make that requires mechanical tact, always go to your grandfather. This little garret library of mine teaches the head, and not the hand. Now, Ned, answer one question: Of what wood is your boot-jack constructed?"

"I do n't know, sir," said Ned, hesitatingly, "is it tan-bark?"

"Tan-bark? No, sir! Tan-bark is but the scaly epidermis or outer covering of the oak. 'T is the stuff the tanner uses to tan his leather. Were it not for tan-bark your boots would have hair upon them. No, my boy; your boot-jack is made of pine. And that pine came from a greater distance than the leather for your boots, doubtless. It once, may be, waved gracefully, Winter and Summer, hundreds of miles from here in some big forest away down in the State of Maine. Thus, while the skin from your boots was stripped from the cow in your next-door neighbor's pasture, the boot-jack which your grandpa has made traveled by land and water, over rugged roads and mountain-passes, down deep, wide rivers, amid rocks and breakers, long, toilsome miles, before it reached our fireside to aid Ned in pulling off his boots. What do you think of that, sir?"

"Why, I think *that* makes my boot-jack a nicer gift than my boots."

“To be sure, Ned. Do not abuse it. It will outlast a thousand pairs of boots. Who knows, if you are careful with it, but you may use this instrument to pull off boots, when you are as old as pap Dominic; and leave it as an heirloom for the use of some future young Ned, when you and granddad and your own sire are all at rest in the ground?”

O, those far glimpses into the future which the older folks have!

Ned was too young to appreciate my thoughts. Life to him—as to all youths of his age—was in the present. There was no dead Past for him to bury—no future, with its ghastly shadows and dim wrecks, to brood upon.

And so he gazed vacantly on me for a moment, and then skirried noisily from the room, with his boot-jack.



XXXVI.

Bohemian Fragment.



HENCE comes the Mist that we see on the tops
of the Mountains ;
Shaking her thin robe far down in the horrible
chasms ;
Settling like death o'er the orchards and cots of the
valleys ?
Where is she born ? and who is her wonderful Maker ?

Wrathful and mystical, frightening the stars of the morning,
She shaketh her wild hair in the proud face of the Sun-
King,
As from the soft East he steps forth with his crown and
his scepter,
To gladden the Earth in its voices of brooks and of
forests :—
She flaunteth her weird arms in the stern face of the
Sun-King ;
And lo ! the great monarch, in shame of the haggardly
beldam,

Shuts on the world that he loves his bright-glittering eye-
lids,
And blushes with crimson to think of the dastardly insult.

Say, whence does the Mist come ? this haughty and insolent specter,
That dares to affront the proud lord of the Earth and the planets ?

O, speak, learnèd Theban,—thou student of Nature's arcana !

Answer, proud critic, resplendent in power of thermology!
Whence does the Mist come ? Answer, thou thesmothete brilliant,

Who fixest the laws of the winds, thou who rollest—rich morsels !—

The lacteal stars beneath the great tongue of thy knowledge !

Whence does the Mist come ? O, speak ! while the multitudes listen !

'T is the spirit of Blight, is this weird Mist, this phantom mendacious,

Who searches our marrow, and chills us and kills us with fevers,—

'T is the pestilence Hecate—begotten of hell and the thesis

Of slime-ridden seas that are sluggishly flowing forever

Out of infernal abysses ! — Is this, then, thy answer,

Thou prophet of wisdom, that readeest the stars in their cycles ?

Is this, then, thy answer?— See! out of his dappled
sedilium

In the red Occident looks the robed priest of the heavens,
And uttereth speech,—while seas pale and streams trem-
ble and quiver,—

I am the Mist's maker. This insolent Mist is my
daughter!

See ye the waters that roll and rush on from the mount-
ains?

Hear ye the dark waves that cover the earth with their
garments?

I kiss them, and leave them—and lo! in the chill of the
twilight

A daughter is born,—and the terrible Mist is that
daughter!—

Mist of the twilight of even and eke of the morning,—
Mist that reclines near my throne in the glory of parting,—
Mist that looks bleak at her birth, but forever increases
In beauty and love as she moves over mountain and
valley.

Beauty in cloudland, and Love in the forest and valley;
Beauty in flower-buds, and Love in the fruits of the
vintage!

XXXVII.

An Autumn Day.



DELIGHTFUL day is this—a day rich in sunshine, fruitfulness, and enjoyment! The woods, waving in gold, and purple, and gray—enchanting combination of colors!—form a scene which the misanthrope might behold with pleasant feelings. The trees, bending beneath the weight of luscious fruits, bring to the mind happy thoughts; and cold, indeed, must be the heart of him who does not breathe to the great Giver a song of thankfulness while looking upon such a scene of plenty.

Not only is the scene one of thankfulness and plenty—it is also one of hope and beauty. Autumn possesses, besides its calm, exhilarating atmosphere, those ever-varying skies that are so full of grand harmonies and that speak so profoundly the skill of an everlasting Artist.

To me, indeed, it is the most delightful season of the whole year. I can not, for my life, see why any person should call this part of the year “dreary” and “sad;” for there are those in the world who do so. Yesterday I picked up a volume of poems, written by a distinguished

author, and glanced upon the following very doleful lines upon Autumn :

“Season of silent melancholy !
Thine eyes are dripping amber tears ;
And though thy garb is rich in jewels
Of golden fruits and studded woods,
Still art thou sad and melancholy !”

And so on,—an unfounded accusation against the most delicious season that ever made glad the heart of a poet. I looked out upon the glorious world after reading these lines, and could not help exclaiming to myself, rather ill-humoredly, I must confess, “*Melancholy*, indeed !” It was as lovely a day as I ever saw. Not a cloud was to be seen, save perhaps an occasionally fleecy speck, which seemed more like

“A silent dream upon the sky—
A breathless soul of sleepy quietude.”

Is there any thing very sad in fruit-laden trees ? in sunny skies ? What if the butterfly be dead ? Does not the bee, gay in its industry, sing a cheerful song as it gathers its Winter store ? What if the buds are “withered and gone ?” Behold the fully developed flower, replete with such perfume as “maketh the heart glad.” See the streams full of vigor and animation ! The hot Summer sun drinketh them up no more ; and they dance wildly and cannily through the woods, snatching the leaves from the banks in their prankishness, and hurrying away to the big river. Was that a bird, my dear friend ? It was ; and there was a thrill in its voice such as the

Spring and Summer hear not forever. O, very sad, forsooth! Come, Mr. Out-of-Humor, and walk with me through all this fairy country, and see the joyous objects that appear on every hand, and then thank God for giving you such a glorious season.

Who, with a soul to enjoy a day like this, could spend it in-doors? Not I, though the paintings of Claude, or the rich voice of eloquent Coleridge, or the seductive eyes of one I love above the rest, were there to lure. The Autumn woods silently beckon me away, and I say to them in my heart of hearts:

“O breezy groves, I'm with you once again!”

I seize my hat, and fill my pockets with books—I know not, in my haste, by what authors written—but I know that they are such as will say entertaining things to me should I not be entertained otherwise. Thus accoutered, away I go to the woodlands!

“There I shall hear the mellow pipe of Pan,
Waking to joy the purpled Autumn wood:
And wood-nymphs, thronging to the leafy temple,
Shall pour into my heart their orisons.”

To me, fond as I am of wild scenery, there is something peculiarly enchanting in a ramble through a big forest. An inspiriting love springs up in my heart when I view those free creatures that abide there. When I hear the birds sing, I am carried one step nearer that glowing land where dwell the pure in heart. Each breath

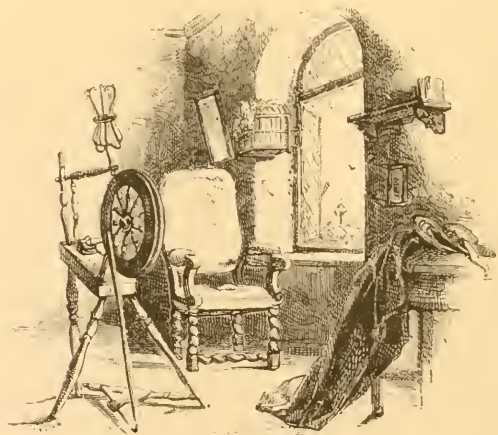
of air in this silent place is laden with rosy freshness. No feverish turmoil jars the serenity of the spirit. All is holy and hallowing.

Thus did I meditate when I entered one of those noble forests which are so prevalent in the West. A red-bird, perched upon a young sapling, greeted me with a welcome song as I entered the wood. I raised my eyes to the delighted bird, blessed him for his unselfish hospitality, and passed on, to hear other red-birds, where the roses were thicker, and the choking dust came not.

As I passed along, in an open space, I encountered a large building which was in a dilapidated condition. It was surrounded by a fruitless orchard, under the trees of which rank weeds were growing. The crows, and other birds of similar character, had built their nests in the vicinity. A solitary ground-squirrel started from the doorway at my approach, and hurried out of sight. I entered the house. The rafters were rotting away rapidly, and here and there the wall had tumbled down. The industrious spider had built his gossamer prison-house in every nook and corner. The conservative bat and the owl held possession of the rickety chimneys. On the hearth-stone sat a solitary house-toad, who seemed to stare at me, as I entered, with his immovable eyes, and ask, "Well, sir, your will?" like a host disturbed in solemn reveries. The centipede crawled over the moth-eaten floor, deeming himself now "lord of the manor-house." Strange, unearthly silence dwelt throughout the place, disturbed only by the breeze, which sighed through the broken doorway and among the crannies with sad echoes of the happy voices

that once made merry the old roof-tree. I sat down upon a decaying window-sill, and meditated.

How long has it been since this silent homestead was inhabited? Fifteen years! How long that seems! Fifteen years ago I sat before that very hearth-stone, one Winter night, and listened to the cheering voice of little May. Where is she now? Out in the woods, dark and beautiful, where the sun comes only in flecked bars, is a little tomb, now green and fragrant. Little May's body is there. Earth never took unto her bosom a lovelier sight than the clay-cold form of the gentle child.



XXXVIII.

Dear, dear May!

“HER memory still within my mind
Retains its sweetest power:
It is the perfume left behind,
That whispers of the flower.”



YET recollect her rosy cheeks and fair hair!
I yet recollect her graceful form and beaming
eye! They often come before my memory in
day-dreams—sweet visions of the past, the far-away, dead
past! And when, sometimes in the still nights, I hear
her ringing laugh—and I often hear it then, as I used to
hear it many a long year ago, in the blue days of Sum-
mer—my heart beats youthfully, and the tear of joy gathers
in my eye, and the smile beams in my face, and I am a
child again.

I well remember that Autumn day when we—little May
and I—started out into the woods, to gather butternuts
and bechnuts, and the shining Autumn flowers. Never
shall I forget that Autumn day. I never saw such a lovely
day before. I have never seen a day like it since. I

shall never behold its likeness again. It seemed to me as if Nature had caught a divine ray from the memorable Eden of the Past, and now blushed with more than her natural beauty. The trees were greener than I ever knew them to be; the sky was of a diviner blue; the birds wore a brighter plumage, and sung more delighting songs; and the streams were full of love, and harmonious with happiness. Our young hearts were infused with the joy and serenity of the outward world, and the birds were sometimes startled by our blissful shouts.

On we wandered through the green woods; sometimes plucking flowers, sometimes chasing a tiny bird that would perch upon the ground—fruitless chase!—sometimes gathering nuts beneath the trees, and sometimes sitting beside a sparkling rivulet, chatting, in innocent phrase, of the bliss of this woodland life.

But at length the evening drew on; and, putting our little gatherings of nuts and flowers in a bundle, we began to think of returning home. After wandering some time among the labyrinths of the forest, we found—woe to our young hearts!—that we were lost! Lost! Reader, were you ever lost in the woods just as darkness began to come on? If so, you can judge of our sorrow. We sat down despairingly, and attempted to ease our aching, bursting hearts with weeping. We called upon our parents. The woods only mocked us with their unfeeling replies. Duski^er and duski^er grew the woods, and stiller and stiller grew the air, till at length a strange darkness came on, and all was silent. Ever since noon, occasional dusky specks might have been seen scarring the blue rim



of the horizon. Now a swarm of dark, heavy clouds rolled up the sky, and the thunder moaned above our heads ominously.

The thick rain-drops commenced pouring through the leaves of the trees, and drenched us, as, rising from the ground, we hurried distractedly through the forest. Finally little May became exhausted with weeping and running, and fell, fainting, upon the ground. I took her in my arms, and strove to bear her along. In vain. Her damp clothing and yielding form were too much for my feeble efforts; and, placing her upon the ground, I kneeled beside her, and cried as boy never cried before. I thought my dear playmate dead—she whom I loved so well—and my soul froze with despair and horror. O, how glad I was when the rain ceased its pattering on the trees—when the morning sun lit up the world with life! But my joy was not lasting; for my little companion lay still upon the earth—O, how still!

At last she opened her eyes. Did I see aright? Her lips moved. I ran to a stream that gurgled near us, and filled my already bedrenched hat with water, carried it to my playmate, poured the cooling draught upon her lips, and rubbed it upon her burning, fevered brow. She thanked me with a smile. A dim smile it was—the ghost of her old smile; yet it bore rapture to my sinking heart; for I felt that the fresh water soothed her, and made her feel happier. After awhile she spoke:

“Where am I?”

“Do n't you remember, May? We are in the woods where we gathered the flowers?”

And then she seemed to sink into a dreary sleep again, murmuring faintly the names of those she held most dear on earth—dreaming, perhaps, of her little pets and the dear ones at home.

How dismal seemed that long, weary day! and how sad the songs of May's favorite wood-birds! And May moaned through all the day, and babbled feverish things; and started out of restless slumbers, with a wandering eye and hectic cheek, and smiled upon me wearily; and then sunk back to her slumbers again. And I cried all day, and rushed through the woods screaming for assistance to carry little May from that lonely place; and always returned to find the sweet girl whispering of flowers and home. But no relief came.

With what bitterness of spirit I beheld the sun set! The stars looked so sorrowful as they peeped through the trees that night, dimly lighting the dark wood. Far, far in the night—O, joy, joy!—I heard a voice call my name. I tried to answer, but could not, my heart beat so high. Presently I saw lights, and heard the murmur of voices, and a hurrying among the leaves. But I remember nothing else that happened then; for I sunk into a swoon.

When I awoke. I was at home, in bed. My mother was there, and my father, and my brother, and my sister—all were there; and the doctor, too, with his reflective face, feeling my pulse, and bathing my head and shaking *his*. But May was not there. Her blue eyes beamed not upon me.

“Where is May?” I asked.

Little May was sick—worse than myself.

In a day or two I was well enough to visit my little playmate. I found her lying, in a strong fever, upon her bed. Her eye was exceedingly bright; yet it seemed like a strange brightness to me. Her cheek was very red; but it was the hectic red of a burning, wasting sickness; and she looked so unlike my own light-hearted May of other days, that the tears started in my eyes as I looked upon her face. May saw them, and she threw such a sorrowful glance upon me, that I was compelled to go out of doors to hide my anguish. Presently I returned, more calm.

“How do you feel, May?” I asked.

“I feel very happy now,” she said, “though all last night it was very warm. But as soon as the birds began to sing, and I could look out of the window and see the flowers, I felt much better. I always feel better when I see and smell the flowers.”

“Do you remember those we gathered in the woods, May? That was a sad day, when we got lost and the rain spoiled our flowers. But you will soon get well, and we will gather them nearer home.”

“I wish you would get me some now,” she said. “I will put them in a vase by my bedside, and look at them all day.”

I did as she requested; and gathered the sweetest roses I could find, and placed them upon a stand beside her, that she might enjoy their fragrance.

But ah! they had not in them the odor that brings the fading spirit back to life!

Day by day her cheek grew thinner and more flushed

with the crimson light of death ; and her eyes became more strangely bright ; and she tossed restlessly in her bed ; but she complained not—moaned not ; and ever talked of a hopeful future—a life among roses and birds—till the full hearts of her parents overflowed.

How beautiful was that Autumn evening, when she requested her weeping mother to draw the chair, in which she was cushioned, near the window, that she might look out upon her favorite flowers !

“Where are they, mother ? I can not see them.”

Little May’s eyes were getting dim.

“There they are, my child, in the garden-bed your mother made for you.”

“I can’t see them, mother. I see nothing but the beautiful sun away off yonder, shining so bright ; and yet even that gets darker and darker. The clouds are passing over it now. How cold it is getting ! Wrap me closer, mother—closer !”

Then little May drooped back upon her pillow, and breathed no word, but still seemed to be looking out after her favorite flowers.


I kneeled down beside my little playmate, and looked into the face that had so often glanced upon me with kindness. I saw a strange smile come quietly upon her pale lips.

“May, do you feel happy now ?”

No answer came. She *was* happy—among the angels.

XXXIX.

Fifteen Years Ago.

IFTEEN years ago, or more, in Summer-time, before the doorway there, where you see those ugly, yellow weeds, was a little green plat, over which Henry and I used to engage in childish sports. Where is Henry now? Go search, on the route to California, for the desolate, tearless graves of the poor adventurers, who have been scattered like chaff by the breezes of Death. You will find Henry's among the number. Pleasant was his eye when I shook the parting hand with him—pleasant with hopefulness. Warm was his heart, and filled with sunny thoughts of future prosperity. As he waved his hand toward me from the departing boat, a tear stood in his eye and mine. Alas! even then a gloomy prescience of his death fell like a storm-cloud upon my spirit. But it was too late to press him to yield up his schemes. The boat was on its way—and the playmate of my youth was gone forever. One month fled, and I heard of his death. The announcement came to me like a shock; for we may not bear the loss of our old associates unmoved. As I look upon the spot in front of the

doorway there, I see his laughing face peeping up through the long grass, like a pleasant memory, and the tears stand on my cheek. I feel, I know that I shall see that face again, not in dreams only, but in the beautiful reality, when Time and I have parted.

Fifteen years ago, or more, Uncle John sat by the Winter fire, in yonder corner—how snug and comfortable it was then!—and coned some old air or legend in his strange way, or smoked his pipe meditatively. A curious fellow was Uncle John, yet a good man withal. The lads and lasses revered his white, thin locks and bald forehead. They would not have insulted him for the world. And Uncle John was full of wisdom, with all his queer ways, and used to tell us children such delightful stories in the long Winter evenings—stories full of nice instruction, that were worth a whole house-full of fairy tales, and such nonsense.

Alas! the voice of Uncle John faded many years ago, even before the fragrant vine which trellised this south window. He, too, is silent in the grave. And Death seemed to respect the venerable man; for he led Uncle John into the "shadow and the gloom" so gently, that I hardly think the good man himself knew that he was going. He was sitting in his arm-chair by the window, one Summer night, looking out upon the meadows, when the children, as usual, gathered around him, and asked the old man for a story: "Do, Uncle John, give us one of your stories." But Uncle John still looked calmly and pleasantly through that same trellised window, without replying. We wondered what could be the matter; for


Uncle John never hesitated a moment in replying when spoken to. A deep grief filled our hearts when we found out that the dear man was dead. And yet death came to him with so light a touch, that our grief was mitigated. Will you believe it? he had just filled his favorite pipe, and was about to light it when he was called away,—so sudden was his death!

Many of those whose voices once cheered this falling building are still alive. But they are married, and gone into far countries, to seek their fortune. I alone remain a witness of its wretchedness and solitude—I alone of all that once smiled beneath its hospitable roof. And thus beholding its desolation, and remembering the changes of these sad fifteen years, I can but imitate the quiet breeze which comes through its forsaken doorway, and sigh. But why should I sigh? Yet a few years will pass, and my clay tenement, with all its soul and vigor gone, will decay like the building in which I sit. In a few years, at most, no rafter, nor beam, nor stone will stand in this solemn place to tell the woodland wanderer that such a building ever existed; and I, with all the mortal things that surround me, will have forever passed from the thoughts of man.



XL.

Wood-Fancies.

UT, casting aside these melancholy thoughts, I stepped through an open window, and entered the forest; for, as before said, there is to me much genuine pleasure in a ramble through the woods.

The melancholy appearance of nature, in this haunt of the hamadryads, well accords with the feelings of my soul. There is more true happiness afforded to me in tending the numerous little flowerets in the woodlands and watching their growth from day, or in reclining upon some mossy bank, and listening to the music of birds, than in all the conviviality of the fashionable world. How peaceful is my mind in these grand solitudes! Here I converse, as face to face, with the very God of Nature; and sometimes I fancy that I see his gentle yet more than sublime countenance smiling upon me through the waving verdure of the trees.

I have plenty of company here. There is an assemblage of happy spirits stirring around me in each bud and flower. The green branches of the lofty trees which overshadow me breathe the most kindly influence. The



birds—"the poor man's minstrels"—do not fail to awaken sacred feelings in my bosom, as they chant their hymns in the leaves above me. It appears to me as if they were sent as messengers of love, to cheer the desponding spirit of him who wanders through the dark woodland.

In these "gray old woods," with the birds and flowers, and the majestic old oaks so cool in shadow, I pass many days of the Spring, Summer, and Autumn. Here I envy no man his state, but rather meditate in pity on the fate of the poor citizen, who toils away the golden hours of life amid the heat and dust of the city. The king upon his throne might envy me these feelings.

The king "envy" me? Am I not *myself* a king here? This wood my glorious realm, and all the bards of all time my subjects? Right loyally they come, at my command, and arouse my listening and indulgent ear with the purest and holiest thoughts—the sublimest stories.

Geoffrey Chaucer, with his quaint imaginings; and Wharton, with his airy muse; and Cowper, with his pleasing "Task;" and Wordsworth, with his thoughtful eloquence; and Byron, the genius of misanthropy and of blighted love; and Spenser, with his delightful pastoral songs; and Shakspeare, the princely one, standing erect above all these, his great brow shining with inspiration: such are my subjects, "ye denizens of the pent city's mart."

Ye common, material kings, what think ye of them? Is all your gold and tinsel aught in the eye of such a king as myself—the hermit-king?

And I build castles, too, after my subjects have amused

me sufficiently—"castles i' the air," that outshine all your frippery.

Build I them in the spangled sunset clouds ; build I them in the waving foliage of the Autumn trees ; build I them in the streams, and they carry me on, on, till I am lost in the wide ocean of delight.

I build them every-where, ye tinsel monarchs, wherever there is beauty and loveliness. And they are as lasting as yours, and, no doubt, afford me more satisfaction while they last.

To be sure, I feel disappointed when they are finally swept away.

But what is my disappointment, O tinsel ones, compared with yours, when the vast shadow of Death encircles your palaces and your subjects :—when you behold all about to be conveyed forever from your eyes ?


Ha ! ha !

I would not taunt you ; but, canopied by these ancient trees, in this dim and desolate spot, with my air-castles, and my book-subjects who never rebel, I do not envy you with all your tinsel.

Build your high designs, ye great kings ; and smile with contempt upon such men as the humble hermit, if you will. *We shall shake hands in the grave !*

XLI.

By Silent Graves.

Y silent graves I walk unseen,
Beneath the midnight moon serene,
And think of those who sleep below,
Unknowing of the moonlight glow.
No sheeted ghost assails me here,
Upstarting from its lonely bier:
Around, beneath, and overhead,
All, all is silent as the dead.

Yon rippling stream, whose dimpled waves
Leap sparkling by the shadowy graves,
Singing a song as they leap along—
A joyant song as they leap along—
Makes the only sound that stirs the breeze,
Is the only thing which the vision sees,
Moving about 'neath the church-yard trees.

The moonbeam slips with the slipping stream ;
And the calm stars seem as if a dream
Of the holy dead were in their eyes,
As they slumber there in the quiet skies,—
 A dream of the sinless dead, whose hands
Are folded in melancholy grace—
Folded so meekly in death's embrace—
While their spirits white, in the realms of light,
 Are singing songs with the angel bands.

And here—ah ! here—on her little bier,
Sleeps silently, from year to year,
The loved one—O, to my heart how near !
I well remember that dim day
When the angels came, in their bright array,
And bore her from the earth away—
From the dark and the sinful world away.
A hymn was sung, a prayer was said,
And then, in the city of the dead,
With the odorous flowers around her head,
We laid her down in her clay-cold bed.

We wept—but O, what useless tears !
From out the beams of yon dreaming spheres,
That seem to sleep in the sky of June
Like the rosy babes of the parent Moon,
Comes a whispered sign to my listening soul—
A sign of love to my sorrowing soul—
Which tells that she, the loved and sweet,
With the stars beneath her shining feet,

Surrounded by all holy things,
And waving an angel's dazzling wings,
Beyond the reach of sorrow and sin,
In a land where shame can not enter in,—
That she, the loved, the early lost,
Whom we delighted to call our own,
Is singing in beauty with the host
That bow around the Father's throne.



XLII.

Silvan Elegy.



I THIN this leafy woodland dim,
 When Nature robes in bloom the year,
 Love kneels to kiss the turf of him
 Whose gentle harp is buried here.

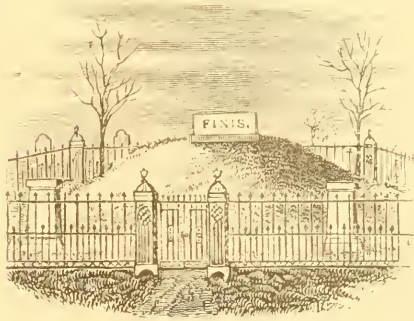
For him no more the stars so red
 Shall grace the dreamy lawns of heaven, —
 For him no more the roses shed
 Their fragrance on the breath of even.

But musing streams shall steal along.
 In sorrow, o'er the velvet sward,
 And lisp a sad and tender song
 Above the pillow of the bard.

Oft, when the sober twilight fades,
 And Luna rolls her silver wave,
 Some airy minstrel of the shades
 Shall sing an anthem o'er his grave.

Here, when the dewy night retires,
The silvan sisterhood repair,
And softly touch their dulcet lyres,
While calm enchantment fills the air.

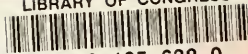
Each starry eve shall him recall,
Each fading flower record his doom,
And Memory's feeling tear shall fall
Upon the woodland poet's tomb!







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